INTRODUCING INDIAN ART

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To
KANWAR LAL
in gratitude and admiration

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The true beauties of art are eternal—all generations will accept them; but they wear the habit of their century.

Delacroix

INTRODUCTORY

"INDIA is a cosmos in itself. Every problem of anthropology or ethnography can be studied here more easily than anywhere else ; every art has its living representative, and often of the most pleasing form ; every science has its illustration, and many on a scale not easily matched elsewhere." When in 1876 Fergusson wrote these lines in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, he was puzzled by the apparent variety of Indian art, but as he set out to examine it, his unerring aesthetic taste told him that "the imperishable records on the rocks or on sculptures and carvings" can be appreciated only as the expression of religious faith or not at all. Convinced of this, he launched on a classification of Indian architecture into Buddhist, Jain, Hindu, and Muhammedan. Fergusson, however, did not work out in detail the implication of his assumption, as his main objective was to attempt a structural criticism of Indian architecture. Since the monumental work of Fergusson many new facts have been discovered, many fresh approaches made, and although the works, amongst others, of Havell, Vincent Smith, Coomaraswamy, Stella Kramrisch, and Zimmer at times show up the limitations of

Fergusson's criticism, not one of them has fundamentally disagreed with it. Indian art has been generally accepted as the expression of the religious faith of the Indian people.

Nevertheless, religious art cannot constitute the only art tradition in any country. In any complex and advanced society art exists at more than one level, and in India there must have been a tradition of secular art. Very few examples of this art have, however, survived and one has to depend mainly on literary evidence in support of such a view. With the exception of Mughul and Rajasthani miniatures of frank secular theme, secular art did not seem to be much prized in this country. Its objective was obviously hedonistic, its sole aim being relaxation to a tired mind. Needless to say that such an art should have been the *bete noire* of the religious teachers. In one Buddhist text, painters have shared with perfumers the distinction of being called purveyors of cheap luxuries. The numerous provoking figures of *maithuna* (erotic couple) in Hindu temples indicate that the hedonistic secular art invaded even the temple premises, and pursued its none too holy work under the highest sanction. Be that as it might, frank animal delight constituted at best a minor tradition, and the major tradition of art in India consisted in extending the aesthetic sensibility into spiritual perception.

Appreciation of the religious art of India presents two difficulties to anyone for whom it is a novel experience. The first is our inability to exercise a willing suspension of disbelief. Conditioned as we are by the contemporary view, that art is principally the expression of the artist's personality, we are apt to read back into Indian art a secular message and dismiss its religious meaning as a relic of a superstitious age. Thus it has been held that if the function of religious art is to turn our attention away from the temporal world, Indian art with its emphasis on the gay abandon of earthly life could hardly have achieved this end. Take, for instance, the life depicted on the gateways of the great *stupa* at Sanchi. No one would deny

the lushness of earthly life in this group of sculptures, but sensuous life in this context does not exist in and for itself. The epic of life unfolded through representations of men, animals, flowers, and plants has been related to a higher perception of life symbolically indicated. The gaiety is at best adventitious. The sculptures hint that the only way of escape from the wheel of transmigration, from birth, decay, and death is to contemplate the significance of the Buddha's message. To appreciate it therefore as a triumph of secular art is both misleading and inaccurate.

The second difficulty is caused by the chameleon phrase "religious art of India". To many minds the religious art of India does not mean anything more than the mystical Hindu art of the late Gupta period and the mediaeval Hindu period. And in the light of this ideal many critics have appraised the rest of Indian art. But in India on account of more than one strong religious tradition, several religious arts developed, and each differed from the other in design and execution. The differences among them had been sometimes wide (Hindu art and Islamic art), at other times narrow (Hindu art and Jain art)--so narrow that it is with considerable reservations that one can speak of any distinction between the two. The phrase "religious art of India" thus may signify either Buddhist art or Jain art or Hindu art or Muslim art or a common quality which knits all of these religious arts together.

Nevertheless, in the absence of one common religious tradition it proves extremely difficult to interpret the development of Indian art. What, for instance, we may ask, is common to the *stupa* at Sanchi, the Lingaraja temple of Bhubaneswar, and the Taj of Agra ? What again are the features common to the wall-paintings of Ajanta and the Mughul miniature ? Why is Gandhara art in spite of its avowed Buddhist subject-matter so un-Indian in appearance ? Analysis of such diverse artefacts poses a stiff difficulty particularly because they spring from no common religious tradition. If Hindu

religious tradition cannot explain the Taj, no more can Islam explain the *raison d'etre* of many-armed icons in Hindu temples. Hence while admitting that Indian art is religious, we must turn to sources other than theology to explain features common to such diverse objects as the *stupa* at Sanchi and the Taj at Agra. For all the apparent differences there is something common between the two. The ivory-workers of Bhilsa (credited with the sculpting of the Sanchi gates) and the stone-cutters of Agra had both been impelled by the genius of a common soil and had breathed the same air, and both of them had received the impact of reality in more or less the same way, although one group worshipped the Buddha and the other was nursed in the most rigid of monotheistic creeds, Islam.

The attitude to reality which Indian artists despite their ethnical and cultural divergences reveal is that apprehension with the aid of sense perception is unreal, and through their art they tried to prove the unreality of the phenomenal world. Objects in Indian art are not delineated in their sensory forms. The eye does not dwell on the graded distribution of colour. A solid object hardly suggests mass or solid form. Depth, volume, dimensions recede into the background till the object of perception merges with its outline. Into this deliberate unreality of the phenomenal world the Indian artist projected his vision of reality. Hence Indian art was largely conventional and hieratic. In painting, this attitude expressed itself through the dancing rhythm of linearism. Inspired by religious vision it could create a masterpiece like Avalokitesvara Padmapani (Ajanta) ; in secular perception it could create such a masterpiece as Ustad Mansur's Turkey-cock. In sculpture again, line rather than mass had been the chief means of expression of the Indian sculptors even though sculptural art is essentially an art of three dimensions. In architecture, the same attitude manifests itself. So massive a temple as the Lingaraja does not impress us by its solidity. On the other hand, the whole temple seems to melt in the upper air. The famous

Kandariya Mahadeva temple at Khajuraho is an architectural replica of the abode of Siva. And the Taj, for all its sensuous loveliness, looks ethereal both in sunlight and moonlight. Whether such a mode of apprehending the objects of sense perception has been brought about by religious education or whether it is the product of physical qualities of light and temperature, or whether it is due to ethnic impulsion we do not know. But this much is certain that the causes are far too complex and too profound to warrant the naive simplification of "religious art".

BUDDHIST SANCTUARIES

THE STUPA

IN India, architecture as a plastic art begins with the rise of the Magadha empire under the Mauryas (c. 322-183 B.C.). The impetus was mainly supplied by the civilizing influence of Buddhism, and to Buddhism we owe a striking form of architecture known in our country by the word *stupa*. It literally means a pile, and is sometimes designated as a relic-shrine in Indian architecture; but the Buddhist *stupas* were not simply relic-shrines. Nor were they merely memorials to the dead. The custom of erecting a *stupa* existed before the Buddha. It originated perhaps with the Vedic ritual of burying the ashes of the dead under earthen mounds. That it was a common practice among the Hindus to bury the ashes of the dead, is evident from one of the Buddhist texts where the Buddha in course of his conversation with Ananda, his cousin and disciple, referred to the erection of a cairn to the king of kings.

Lord Buddha said, "As they treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Ananda, should they treat the remains of the Tathagata. At the four cross roads a cairn should be erected to the Tathagata. And whosoever shall there place garlands or perfumes, or paint, or make

salutation there, or become in its presence calm in heart that shall long be to them for a profit and a joy.

'The men, Ananda, worthy of a cairn, are four in number. Which are the four?

'A Tathagata, an Able Awakened one, is worthy of a cairn. One awakened for himself alone (Pacceka-buddho) is worthy of a cairn. A true hearer of the Tathagata is worthy of a cairn.

'And on account of what circumstance, Ananda, is a Tathagata, an Able Awakened One, worthy of a cairn?

'At the thought, Ananda: "This is the cairn of the Exalted One, of that Able Awakened One", the hearts of many shall be made calm and happy; and since they there had calmed and satisfied their hearts they will be reborn after death, when the body has dissolved, in the happy realms of heaven. It is on account of this circumstance, Ananda, that a Tathagata, an Able Awakened One, is worthy of a cairn.'[1]

Thus the Buddha not only refers to the established practice of erecting a *stupa*, but attaches a new meaning to it. What was simply a memorial to the dead, Havell's interpretation notwithstanding,[2] acquired a new significance, and was invested with a religious symbol. Apart from the desire to preserve the Buddha's memory or to mark some holy place associated with him, or to cherish the memory of some Buddhist monks, the *stupa* came to fulfil the same need as did the temple.

When the Buddha died some five hundred years before Christ, his disciples performed his obsequies in strict accordance with the injunction they had received from their Master. But no sooner was his body cremated than dispute arose over his remains. His disciples came to terms by distributing a portion of his remains among themselves; and these remains, according to Buddhist tradition, were enshrined as relics in eight parts in India.[3] We have, however, no historical evidence of the existence of the original Eight Great Stupas.

The earliest *stupa* of which something can be said with some measure of certainty belongs to the reign of Asoka (c. 269-232 B.C.)[4].

Asoka was a patron of Buddhism and its zealous propagator. But we must not think, as Havell thought, that he promulgated Buddhism as the State religion.[5] Buddhism was Asoka's personal religion, but he was tolerant of other beliefs also. The Twelfth Rock-Edict, near Kalsi, at Chakrata in Dehra Dun district states that Asoka respected the Ajivikas, the chief rivals of the Buddhists, the Brahmans, and the Jains.[6] Asoka himself dedicated rock-cut caves to the Ajivika monks on the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills, near Gaya, Bihar. Tradition has it that to popularize Buddhism Asoka built as many as 84,000 *stupas*, but of this fabulous number merely one containing relics of the Buddha survives at Piprawa in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh. The Piprawa *stupa* is built of bricks, and has a diameter of 116 feet and a height of 21 feet. It gives us some idea of the *stupa* built during Asoka's time. A typical *stupa* was a hemispherical dome *(anda)* of unburnt bricks caked in thick plaster. In the centre of the dome a small space was left, called the casket chamber, to house the relics. The top of the dome was flat, and was surrounded by a small box *(harmika)* from the centre of which rose the rod *(danda)* of the parasol *(chatra)*. The dome was surrounded by a railing or balustrade *(vedika)* providing a circular terrace *(medhi)* for circumambulation *(pradakshina)* for the devotees.

Another Asokan *stupa* now remains concealed under the stone casing of the great *stupa* at Sanchi. This structure is one among many such remains known as the Bhilsa Topes.[7] Sanchi is a few miles to the south-west of Vidisa in Madhya Pradesh. The Asokan *stupa* at Sanchi was enlarged a century later during the Sunga period (c. 184-172 B.C.). A thick stone wall was erected at some distance from the original *stupa*, and the void was filled in with rubble. Thus faced in stone, the *stupa* became the present size—120 feet in diameter and 54 feet in height (pl. 1). On the flat of the dome was

built a pavilion from which rose the shaft of the triple umbrella. The circular terrace, some 16 feet from the ground, was bounded by a stone railing, and was approached by a double flight of steps on the southern side. Finally, another path for circling the *stupa* was provided along the ground at a distance of 9½ feet from the dome. A stone railing, replacing the old Asokan wooden palisade, enclosed the ambulatory passage on the ground. The execution and design of the railing indicate that it was clearly influenced by the carpenter's art. Like the wooden railing, it has posts *(stambha)*, cross-bars *(suchi)*, and rounded copings *(ushnisha)*.

Four gateways *(toranas)* at the four cardinal points of the compass afford entrance to the great *stupa*. These carved gateways were not put up at the same time. The oldest is the southern gateway, constructed towards the latter half of the first century B.C. Then came in turn the northern, eastern, and western. These gateways are alike in their structure. Each gateway is 34 feet long and 20 feet wide, and consists of two square upright posts, 15 feet high, surmounted by a capital. The capitals, adorned with standing dwarfs or lions, or elephants, support three architraves with comely volute ends between each of which occurs a row of sculptured balustrades or rails.

The Sanchi gateways depict the story of Buddhism, while unfolding before us a panorama of life in all its aspects—flower and foliage, men and animals, gods and goddesses. As these reliefs were carved during the phase of Hinayana Buddhism, the image of the Buddha does not occur, the life of the Master being represented by symbols. Besides the Birth, the Enlightenment, the First Sermon, the Death, every little thing regarding the life of the Buddha has been carved on the gateways. The Birth is symbolized either by a lotus or by Maya Devi, the mother of the Buddha. The symbols, such as a throne beneath a *pipal* tree, (the tree under which the Buddha attained Enlightenment), the tree by itself, a crowd of worshippers, stand for

the Enlightenment. The First Sermon is represented by a wheel, while the Death is symbolized by a *stupa.* In addition to episodes from the life of the Buddha, there are scenes relating to the previous incarnations of the Buddha, that is, *jatakas.* The story depicted on the west gate (front view, lower architrave) is an attractive one. A cautionary tale for the edification of jealous wives from the *Chaddanta Jataka*, it tells us how Bodhisattva[8], had once been born the elephant-king. He had two wives, one of whom bore ill-will against him. In order that she might revenge herself upon her husband she prayed that she might be reborn as the queen of Banaras. When she was reborn, she one day feigned illness, and declared that nothing short of the tusk of the elephant-king would cure her. The tusk was brought, but on seeing it the queen died of a broken heart.

Fruits, flowers, and foliage as well as figures of animals and birds, such as lions, leogriffs, camels, elephants, horses, bulls, goats, winged lions, and peacocks, among these carvings, indicate a keen appreciation of mundane existence. Other sculptures represent the figures of *yaksha* (local tutelar deity) and *yakshi* (a female *yaksha*). To the praises which have been lavished on the *yakshi* figure, it would be futile to add (pl. 2). In the words of Havell, "The robust young damsel with arms and legs overweighted with ornaments who appears on the Sanchi gateways as a wood-nymph hanging on to the boughs of a mango-tree may seem less graceful and refined than the Dryad of pure Greek art, though the primeval forest might know this rustic beauty better than the elegant town-bred maid of Athens."[9]

The *stupa* at Bharhut in the old Nagod State, situated between Allahabad and Jabalpur, was constructed probably around 150 B.C. It has now perished, but its railings and geteways, discovered in 1873 by General Cunningham, may be seen in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The Bharhut railings are carved, and not plain like those of the great *stupa* at Sanchi. The subject-matter of these carvings is the same—scenes from the life of the Buddha and the *Jataka*

tales, but the treatment and execution are different. Compared to the art of the great *stupa* at Sanchi, the art of Bharhut is less sophisticated. The dramatic treatment of stories on the gateways of the Sanchi *stupa* is here absent, but we are repaid for this loss by the wealth of narrative detail and hard, clear expression. The stories narrated in the Bharhut reliefs, with labels added for identifying the subject-matter, give us joy akin to the reading of a picaresque novel. Take, for instance, the relief depicting the dream of Maya Devi in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (pl. 3). That Maya Devi is dreaming at night is indicated by the burning lamp in the bed-chamber. The attendants cluster around her couch. She dreams that she is being approached by a white elephant descending from heaven. In this way story after story passes before our eyes, as in a dumb show, lacking sophistication yet full of vigour and detail to which every bosom returns an echo.

Between the second century B.C. and fourth century A.D. *stupas* were built in southern India as well, where Buddhism spread on account of missionary activities of Asoka. The *stupas* in the south are interesting, as they acquired a certain regional style different from those at Bharhut and Sanchi. The most important *stupas* were at Amaravati and Nagarjunikonda in Guntur district, and Jaggayyapeta, Ghantasala, and Gudivada in Krishna district. Nothing remains of these *stupas* except the base and some fragments of the outer casing. The distinctive feature of the south Indian *stupas* were their towering dome and marble surface with sculptured panels of rich narrative and decorative beauty.

Some fine sculptures from Najarjunikonda *stupa* may be seen in the Nagarjunikonda Museum, Nagarjunikonda, and also in the National Museum, Delhi, while those from Amaravati are displayed in the British Museum and in the museums of Madras and Calcutta. From the details of these marble friezes Percy Brown has skilfully reconstructed the original *stupa* at Amaravati.[10] The construction of the Amaravati *stupa* passed through two stages. Begun

perhaps about 200 B.C. when the Hinayana was in the ascendant, it was completed in about 200 A.D. when the Mahayana had supplanted the Hinayana. The *stupa* was 162 feet in diameter and probably between 90 and 100 feet in height. Its two circular terraces, upper and lower, were surrounded by balustrades as at Sanchi ; but unlike Sanchi, there were pillars within the 15 feet wide winding corridor of the lower ambulatory passage. The gateway of the Amaravati *stupa* was differently designed. The railing of the lower passage projected forward a little thus forming an open portico, at the end of which there were two pillars and a pair of seated lions on its coping. The Amaravati *stupa* was distinguished by its beautifully decorated sculptured rails. Indeed in sheer splendour and magnificence of sculpture the Amaravati *stupa* had no peer. Hsuan Tsang, who visited it in 639 A.D., praised it and pointed out very intelligently that "it was adorned with all the magnificence of the palaces of Bactria". Foreign influence on the sculptures at Amaravati did not escape the notice of the Chinese traveller.

As in southern India, so in the north-west of India, the ancient Gandhara, the structure of the *stupa* underwent considerable modifications during the first five centuries of the Christian era. The rock-edict of Asoka at Shahbazgarhi, nine miles from Hoti-Mardan (Western Pakistan), indicates that Buddhism had penetrated into this region in the third century B.C. The great Kushana emperor, Kanishka, (probably first century A.D.) was a great patron of Buddhism ; and Gandhara art, often inappropriately called Graeco-Buddhist, flourished during his reign. Gandhara art is Roman style grafted on Buddhist subject-matter. Hence both sculpture and architecture wear an alien look in the Gandhara region. Architectural motifs, such as the Corinthian pillar, capital, pediments, entablatures, all unknown to Indian architecture, appeared in the Buddhist monuments in Gandhara. Myriads of Buddhist *stupas* and monasteries have been excavated at Taxila and in Peshawar district. At Shahji-

ki-dheri, east of Peshawar, was unearthed in 1909 the site of the famous *stupa* built by Kanishka. The site yielded the priceless relic-casket of Kanishka containing the ashes of the Buddha.

From the example of the Dharmarajika *stupa* at Taxila, also called the Chir Tope, it may be assumed that the earlier *stupas* in Gandhara, like those at Bharhut and Sanchi, had hemispherical contour ; but later *stupas* showed a vertical bias by elongating its body, that is, its dome. The tower-like appearance of the Gandhara *stupas* was achieved first, by a high podium ; and secondly, by the drum which consisted of several diminishing tiers crowned by receding umbrellas. The *stupa* at Takht-i-bahi, some twenty-four miles from Nowshera Junction, may serve as a good example for illustration. Though not well preserved, it has still retained its architectural features. The *stupa* adjoins a monastery, and stands in the centre of a court enclosed on all its three sides by small chapels. The dome of the *stupa* stands on a podium, 20 feet wide and 8 feet high, and rises to a height of 50 feet.

It has already been suggested that the *stupa* acquired a religious significance after the decease of the Buddha. It became the symbol of *Mahaparinirvana* or the Great Decease. But was it also symbolic of the microcosm of the universe ? Was it a translation in stone of the cosmos ? Many critics have thought so, and have read an elaborate symbolism into the various parts of the *stupa*. A recent critic of Indian art has put the matter thus : "Like the Mesopotamian ziggurut, the basic concept of the stupa was an architectural diagram of the cosmos. Above the square or circular base of the stupa rose the solid and hemispherical dome or *anda*, which was intended as an architectural replica of the dome of heaven, enclosing the world-mountain rising from earth to heaven. In the architecture of the stupa the presence of this world-mountain was suggested only by the *harmika*, a balcony-like member at the summit of the mound that typified the Heaven of the Thirty-three Gods located at the summit of the cosmic peak enclosed within the dome of the sky. The symbolism was com-

pleted by the mast or *yashti* which rose from the crown of the dome. This member typified the world axis extending from the infra-cosmic waters to the empyrean, and in certain stupas its symbolical function was made even more specific by an actual wooden mast penetrating the solid masonry dome. Above the dome proper this mast served as a support for tiers of circular umbrellas or *chatras* symbolizing the devalokas or heavens of the gods culminating in the heaven of Brahma."[11]

In the above view the *stupa*, like the later Hindu temple, is a microcosm of the universe. This is debatable ; at any rate, the perception of its architecture does not suggest so. On the contrary, the *stupa* symbolizes the Great Decease, for what the *stupa* had set out to do was to preserve the relics of the Buddha or Buddhist saints. The thought of the Great Decease stabilizes our emotion or feeling. The great *stupa* at Sanchi, for instance, induces this mood of quietude and calm very effectively by hinting at a contrast between the transient human drama depicted on the *toranas* and the thought of *Mahaparinirvana* suggested by the dome. Moreover, if the hemispherical dome was said to have symbolized the dome of heaven, what did the cylindrical dome of the Dhamekh *stupa* at Sarnath, near Banaras, suggest ? In fact, a comparison of the early *stupas* with the later ones indicates a tendency towards the elevation of each part of the *stupa* construction. In course of time the early hemispherical dome began to acquire a spire-like shape. The *stupas* in the Gandhara region, the *pagodas* of Burma, the Buddhist shrines of Java and Siam show this tendency. They were evolved out of the hemispherical domes of Bharhut and Sanchi, and yet how different they look from the earlier ones. The view of Mingalazedi *pagoda* at Pagan in Burma, dated 1274, would clearly indicate that the dome has been transformed into a cone "almost merging into the finial". What does the modification in the structure of the *stupa* reveal ? Does it signify that the symbolic meaning which the hemispherical dome intended to

convey began to shift also with the change in the shape of the dome ? Or was it simply an architectural modification—an urge which impelled the architect to create new forms out of the existing ones ?

The latter explanation could only be offered if artistic consciousness were considered as a separate entity, but in India, as in mediaeval Europe, art was the handmaiden of religion. It never was an end in itself. So we have to fall back upon the first alternative, namely, that the change in the form of the *stupa* architecture was due to a shift in the meaning the *stupa* intended to convey. The early *stupas*—those at Bharhut and Sanchi—belonged to the Hinayana phase of Buddhism when the historical Buddha occupied the foreground of the minds of his followers. Lord Buddha, the sage-prince of the Sakya clan (a tribe of the Himalayan foothills), renounced life in search of permannent peace which he attained in the form of *Nirvana*. Hence intense meditation, concentration of mind upon the object of meditation, and then the *summum bonum* of life, *Nirvana*, became the chief object of emulation of the Buddha's followers. One could attain this end by an exercise of will and effort here in this very world, not in the dreamland of spiritual make-believe.

The *stupa* built during the Hinayana phase affirms this attitude. Far from suggesting to the beholder the architectural replica of the dome of heaven, the hemispherical dome of the early *stupas* symbolized the Buddha in the state of *Nirvana*, that is, absolute serenity springing from complete withdrawal. The fact that the dome is seen firmly planted on the base indicates that the *Nirvana* could be attained in this life and on this soil. This is further intensified by the square *harmika* on the top of the dome. The *harmika* resists all attempts at soaring. Wherever Hinayana Buddhism flourished, the *stupa* was built in the same style. In Ceylon, for instance, where Hinayana Buddhism is still the religion of the people the form of the *stupa* did not alter with time. The *dagobas* of Anuradhapura (third century B.C.) and those of Polonnaruva (twelfth century A.D.) do not

essentially differ from the early *stupas* at Bharhut and Sanchi. The hemispherical dome and the square *harmika* continued their office.

But Hinayana Buddhism was replaced by Mahayana Buddhism with inevitable change in *stupa* architecture. In Mahayana Buddhism the historical Buddha faded into the background, and was superseded by Bodhisattva who comes from afar to sojourn among men for their salvation. He is Amitabha, the light-bearer, the dispenser of grace. The hemispherical dome had its roots in the earth, and therefore could not adequately symbolize the new attitude. Attempts were necessarily made to elongate its body so as to suggest the new Buddha, the transcendental and the divine Buddha.

THE CHAITYAGRIHA

According to the Buddha's monastic precept, the monks and nuns were enjoined to retire for meditation and rest during the rains. The practice was known as "rain-rest", and it necessitated the construction of two types of buildings : the *chaityagriha* or hall for religious assembly and the *vihara* or monastery. Originally these structures were made of wood, but in course of time they came to be carved out of rock in the form of artificial caves. Such a cave afforded an excellent asylum to the monks and nuns : it protected them from torrential rains, steaming humidity, and torrid heat. As these caves were hewn out of rock, the term "cave-architecure" is often applied to them, but it is exceedingly misleading ; for it is likely to indicate that the caves were located within natural grottoes which they were not. A more precise term is "rock-cut architecture" suggested by Percy Brown.[12]

Whether rock-hewn architecture was adopted by the Indian from Egypt through Persia or whether it was an indigenous growth, is a matter of dispute among scholars. It should be sufficient for our

purpose to note that the structure of the *chaityagriha* is a translation into stone of the earlier wooden model found, for instance, in the replicas at Bharhut and Sanchi *stupas.* The replacement of the wooden *chaityagriha* by the rock-cut chapel became practicable first, because stone is more enduring than wood as building material ; and secondly, because the patrons were rich enough. A survey of the existing *chaityagrihas* would indicate that the majority of them were put up near business centres along the hills of the Western Ghats to the south of Bombay. Evidently, these chapels were gifts of the merchant class, the *vaishya* community, who were driven by their social inferiority into the protection of the less exclusive Buddhist fold to attain a higher social status as well as spiritual solace.

The art of constructing a *chaityagriha* is laborious without being subtle. Instead of beginning the work from the plinth the work was started from the ceiling and carried downwards. To do this a level ledge was obtained by scrapping a portion of the hill. The facade of the chapel was then marked out. This done, the quarrymen cut a large window in order that the ceiling might be completed. No scaffolding was required as the quarrymen made use of the rough rocks for footholds. Among the implements used were pickaxe for carving and chisel for dressing.

A *chaityagriha* is a hall with a *chaitya* inside. The word *chaitya,* signifying a funeral pile, is synonymous with the word *stupa* discussed in the previous section.[13] All Buddhist chapels contain *chaityas* or *stupas* for worship. The shrine was placed at the apsidal end of the hall opposite to the entrance door. The hall consisted of a nave flanked by two aisles terminating in an apse. The roof was semicircular in form, and was ribbed like that of chapels made of wood. Above the entrance door was slit a large window shaped like a horse-shoe, often called the sun-window, through which light was admitted. The side-aisles were used for circumambulating around the *stupa* or the *chaitya.*

The plan and arrangement of a *chaityagriha* reminds one of a Roman basilica, a point noted both by Christian missionaries and critics. Missionaries in the early nineteenth century were surprised to notice similarity between the *chaityagriha* and the Christian church. The critics who have studied the architecture of the Buddhist chapel have often drawn on church architecture for comparison. Thus speaking of the *chaityagriha* at Karli Fergusson says, "The building resembles, to a very great extent, an early Christian church in its arrangements : consisting of a nave and side-aisles, terminating in an apse or semidome, round which the aisle is carried. . . . As a scale for comparison, it may be mentioned that its arrangement and dimensions are very similar to those of the choir of Norwich Cathedral, or of the Abbaye aux Hommes at Caen, omitting the outer aisles in the latter buildings . . . Immediately under the semidome of the apse, and nearly where the altar stands in Christian churches is placed the dagoba . . ."[14] There was a regular intercourse between India and the Hellenistic kingdoms both before and after Christ, and one is tempted to say that the plan and design of the church was perhaps influenced by the Buddhist chapels. Again it might also be held that the similarity was adventitious.

The earliest examples of rock-cut caves, however, did not belong to Buddhists. The group of seven caves on the Barabar and Nagarjuni hills in Gaya, Bihar, were excavated at the instance of Asoka and Dasaratha, his grandson, for use of Ajivika monks. The earliest of these seven is the Sudama cave which bears the inscription of Asoka dating back to the twelfth year of his reign, that is, 257 B.C. The Lomas Rishi cave, the most beautiful of the seven, does not bear any inscription. The sloping uprights, jointed beams, and the ornamental porch of the cave indicate that it is evidently an imitation of timber architecture.

THE HINAYANA PHASE

Like the *stupa*, *chaitya* achitecture passed through the two phases of Buddhism, the Hinayana and the Mahayana. The earliest *chaitya-grihas* of the Hinayana phase constructed during the second century B.C. are to found at Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, and Ajanta (No. 10), while those hewn in the first century B.C. are at Bedsa, Ajanta (No. 9), Nasik, and Karli. The Kanheri *chaitya* on the island of Salsette, near Bombay, put up in the middle of the second century A.D., marks the culmination of *chaitya* architecture. In the absence of sufficient historical records authorities rely on internal evidence for fixing the dates of these caves. If the wood-construction theory of the origin of the *chaityagriha* is valid, the earlier chapels must have betrayed features of wooden construction. Another indication is provided by the arch on facade. It may be said that the cruder the curves of the arches, the earlier the date of the construction. To these may be added yet another test, namely, the decided batter of the pillars in the hall. In the wooden *chaityagriha* the inward slope of the pillar is naturally to be expected as it had to neutralize the pressure exerted by the heavy roof, but in a lithic construction such an inward slope, being architecturally unnecessary, could only be a meaninglesss copy.

The earliest type of the Buddhist chapel reveals efforts to overcome the slavish imitation of the wooden prototype. Experimental as these *chaityagrihas* are, they have always commended themselves to the attention of critics as showing initial efforts in stone-construction. The Bhaja cave, near Poona, is the oldest chapel of the Hinayana phase. It affords a clear illustration of the effort of the architect forcing stone to yield architectural form. The entrance and the facade of the chapel now look like a great archway, but originally the open space was filled in with wooden construction as is evident from the position of mortices and pin-holes. Woodwork was also used

generously in the interior. The ribs of the roof and the finial of the *stupa* with its umbrella were constructed of wood. The hall measures 55 feet long and 26 feet across with side-aisles 3½ feet wide. The interior pillars, plain octagonal shafts, slope at an awkward angle.

If the beams on the archway of the Bhaja cave are entirely of wood, those of the Kondane chapel are half-timbered. The Kondane facade shows a more firm outline ; the halting and indecisive curves of the Bhaja cave have been supplanted by bold curvature.

The *chaityagrihas* at Pitalkhora and Ajanta (No. 10) are now in ruin. The larger dimensions of the Ajanta *chaityagriha*, 100 feet by 40 feet, indicate another advance in the evolution of rock-cut architecture. The architect is slowly learning to work on a large rock surface. The Pitalkhora chapel shows use of stone in the ribs of the side-aisles, and is by the same token later in date.

Cave 9 at Ajanta is interesting for two reasons : its facade is entirely chiselled from the rock, and its arches display shapely curves.

The Pandu Lena (lena=cave) *chaityagriha*, five miles to the south-west of Nasik, deserves notice for various reasons. Although its porticoes are wholly carved out of rock, the construction still retains the traces of woodworker's technique. In the earlier chapels the pillars were without base ; in the Pandu Lena hall they appear for the first time with a base. The base is shaped like a vase, and is derived, as Percy Brown argues, from the carpenter's device so that the wooden timbers might be secure against the ravages of insects. The shape of the pillars, too, became tall and slender—no doubt an improvement on the earlier solid octagonal uprights. This was achieved by providing the pillars with a diameter of one-eighth of its height.

The *chaityagriha* at Bedsa, a few miles east of Bhaja, shows another stage in the development of *chaitya* architecture. Its distinctive feature is its facade with two columns in front supporting the portico. Authorities believe that the arrangement of the entrance of

this *chaityagriha* has affinity with the entrance to the Greek temple (known as *distyle in antis*) illustrated, for instance, in the temple of Themis, Rhamnus. Considering the large size of the entrance columns, Fergusson thinks that they are more like free standing pillars than columns, and argues that they should have stood free instead of supporting a verandah.[15] The capitals of these pillars are fine examples of sculpture. Each one of them is surmounted by figures of men and women mounted on either horses or elephants. The interior of the Bedsa hall is bare and austere.

So much for the experimental chapels; now for the Karli *chaitya-griha*, the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the rock-cut caves. The *chaityagriha* at Karli is not far from Bhaja cave, and can be reached from Lonavla railway station, some eighty miles to the south-east of Bombay. Its prominent facade with pillars in front, the fine sun-window, its noble interior, its richly ornamented columns, the imposing *chaitya* at the apsidal end make the Karli cave the most complete as well as the most beautiful of its kind in India. The facade must have been once beautiful and well proportioned but now, owing to a flaw in the rock, the view of the right side is totally eclipsed. Like the Bedsa cave, the Karli cave also had two large pillars of which one is *in situ* ; the other disappeared long ago. But unlike Bedsa, the pillars do not form part of architectural composition. They stand free, and are evidently Asokan pillars. This makes one feel that the pillars at the enterance to the Bedsa cave are adventitious as the feature has not been repeated subsequently. The Karli pillar is distinguished by its tall base, octagonal shaft, and the fluted abacus above the capital with a pedestal for four lions. The vestibule is behind the pillar in which is recessed the horse-shoe archway.

The interior, which has already been referred to in the quotation from Fergusson, is beautifully evocative (pl. 4). Its beauty is born of the harmony of its three component parts, namely, the colonnade, the vaulting, and the sun-window. The colonnade consisting of thirty-

seven columns in all, fifteen on each side and seven encircling the apse, is beyond doubt an improvement on the deployment of the columns in the early caves. The treatment of intercolumniation betokens good taste—"the space between each is but little more than the width of the column itself".[16] The columns are richly decorated except those round the apse. Each column has a pot base, an octagonal shaft, and a capital with a square abacus supporting a sculptured group consisting of a pair of elephants on one side and horses on the other, each animal supporting a male and a female figure. Though these sculptured groups are separated from each other by the pillars, they create an optical illusion of a triforium frieze viewed from a distance. Above the sculptured frieze is the high arched vault of the roof. The ribs of the vault were of teak wood. Beneath the semidome of the apse, is the *stupa* or *chaitya*, more massive than those of the earlier caves, hewn out of the rock. It has a hemispherical shape, and is surmounted by a square finial, while the canopied wooden umbrella is enclosed by rails carved in low relief.

The unique evocative quality of the Karli chapel depends to a great extent on the wonderful play of light and shade in the interior. Light is present in three varying degrees of intensity, the transition between them being gradual. The *stupa* is bathed in the mellow light through the sun-window ; the pillars on both sides stand in dim religious light, while the pillars themselves cast massive shadows on the side-aisles. In this way the play of light and shade creates a magic world of unreality.

The latest examples of rock-cut *chaitya* architecture are the chapels at Junnar and Kanheri. The *chaityagrihas* at Junnar are interesting, because they have rectangular ends instead of the usual apsidal and are without pillared aisles. Another *chaityagriha*, Ganesh Lena (No. 6), at Junnar has been greatly admired on occount of its admirable proportion and rich decoration. The Kanheri *chaityagriha*, though much smaller, is built in exact imitation of the Karli chapel.

THE HINAYANA AND THE MAHAYANA

The second phase of *chaitya* architecture started in the fifth century during the Gupta period (A.D. 320- c. 540). Therefore between the construction of the latest *chaityagrihas* of the first phase and the earliest of the second more than two centuries intervened. Meanwhile Buddhism underwent radical changes—the Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) sect practically disappeared from the country, and the Mahayana (Great Vehicle) sect came into existence. The theological difference between the two sects is wide. The Hinayana sect took no notice of the Divine. Its highly ascetic ethics and rational philosophy, with its stress on personal effort to attain liberation from the bondage of birth, could only appeal to those who really hungered for salvation, and were prepared to lead a continent and austere life. The Buddha had led a life of mortification, and worked out his own salvation. In the Hinayana sect, therefore, there was no place for worship, devotion, and above all grace from god. The Buddha was never thought of as an incarnation. Hence in Hinayana art the Buddha was represented by symbols as in the reliefs carved at Bharhut and Sanchi. But what is most interesting is that the carvings also depict crowds of adorers worshipping the symbols of the Buddha. Strictly speaking, this is alien to the spirit of the Hinayana philosophy. With the coming of the Mahayana sect icons of the Buddha began to appear, and the Buddhists, following Brahmanical tradition, came to pay homage to new gods and goddesses, and looked forward to divine grace in return.

The new sect, the Mahayana or Great Vehicle, introduced the concept of beatitude and divine help, and with the introduction of grace appeared many gods and goddesses to help the aspirant after *Nirvana*. A candidate for *Nirvana* now no longer needed to be an ascetic ; gods in heaven were working for his salvation. "I must bear the burden of all beings, for I have vowed to save all things

living, to bring them safe through the forest of birth, age, disease, death and rebirth. I think not of my own salvation, but strive to bestow on all beings the royalty of supreme wisdom", so says the new Buddhist god. A whole new pantheon was invented by the Mahayana sect possibly to vie with the Hindu gods and goddesses. Of these one is Avalokitesvara (the Lord who looks Down), also known as Padmapani (the Lotus-Bearer), the symbol of compassion, immortalized in one of the Ajanta caves.[17] Another god is Manjusri, who teaches people ten *paramitas* or spiritual perfections. Vajrapani (the Bearer of Thunderbolt), a third, is the god who drives away sin and evil. Gautama Buddha, the historical Buddha, was also thought of as an incarnation of the Divine, and was given a new appellation, Amitabha (Immeasurable Glory). A Buddhist poem, the *Lalitavistara*, gives a Mahayana version of the Buddha's life ; Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* follows this. Apart from male divinities, feminine divinities also entered into the Mahayana pantheon. One was Prajnaparamita, the Perfection of Insight. Another goddess was Tara, the Star. Strictly speaking, she belongs to the Vajrayana (Vehicle of Thunderbolt) sect, an offshoot of the Mahayana sect, according to whom *Nirvana* could be obtained by acquiring magical powers. Lesser divinities, too, found a place in the Mahayana sect, chief of whom are Matangi (Outcast Woman), Pisachi (Demoness), Yogini (Sorceress), and Dakini (She-Ghoul).

THE MAHAYANA PHASE

The transition from the Hinayana school to the Mahayana school was completed during the first century A.D., and its impact was felt on rock-cut architecture when it was revived in the tolerant atmosphere of the Gupta period. The Mahayana caves are found cheek by jowl with the Hinayana at Ajanta, Ellora, and Aurangabad.

It would be incorrect to assume that the radical change in Buddhism brought about an equally radical change in architecture. The *chaityagriha* with its central basilican plan, the vaulted roof, and colonnade retained its essential structure; in stylistic decor of the interior, however, the departure is pronounced.

The new features are well illustrated in the *chaityagrihas* Nos. 19 and 26 at Ajanta. The former, excavated around A.D. 500, is the earlier and more lavishly executed. The chapel is not large, and has the same dimensions as the Ajanta Cave No. 10 already referred to. A colonnade of fifteen pillars, with rounded shafts and decorated with bands of foliated ornaments, divides the interior into a nave and aisles. Each one of these pillars carries a cushion capital and a massive bracket supporting a triforium frieze of beautifully carved relief. Apart from softening the hardness of the solid rock, these sculptures produce a luxuriant effect. The decorative sculpture of the nave is complemented by the *stupa* in the ambulatory. The hemispherical *stupa* of the early *chaityagriha* has here given place to an elongated steeple touching the vault of the apse. The large figure of the standing Budha is ensconced in the niche of the *stupa*, while its attenuated finial, conisting of a *harmika* and triple umbrella surmounted by a vase, touches the roof of the cave. The facade of the *chaityagriha*, like its interior, is also richly decorated (pl. 5). In front of the single door is a portico supported by two pillars. The sides of the window and the rest of the front are covered with high relief statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Particularly noteworthy among the sculptures on the facade is the panel of Nagaraja and his queen.

Over-elaboration is just as noticeable in the Ajanta *chaityagriha* No. 26. Multitudes of flying deities, erotic couples, sitting and standing Buddhas run riot in this sumptuous cave. Another celebrated *chaityagriha* of the Mahayana phase is at Ellora, some sixty miles from Ajanta, known after the name of Visvakarma, Lord of the Arts,

a Hindu god. The cave acquired its present name, because it became the favourite haunt of carpenters. The facade of the Visvakarma is its central feature. We miss here the distinctive sun-window which is here replaced by a small circular opening with an ornamental trefoil curvature. We also miss the plastic carving as in Ajanta Nos. 19 and 26. The twenty-eight pillars dividing the nave from the aisles are simple and bare. The *stupa*, 27 feet high, is distinguished by a projecting niche containing a large squat Buddha flanked by attendants.

THE VIHARA

The Buddhist vihara or monastery, like the *chaityagriha*, was also carved out of rock. They were utilitarian residential cells without architectural pretensions. The earliest monasteries date from the second century B.C., while the latest persist as late as the seventh century A.D. Situated necessarily near the *chaityagrihas*, these caves flourished at Ajanta, Aurangabad, and Nasik. As in the case of the *chaityagriha*, the construction of these monasteries passed through two successive phases : the Hinayana and the Mahayana.

The Hinayana caves are not alike in their design and execution. They are essentially imitations of wooden structures, and consisted of cells opening out from the unadorned central hall, resembling an open courtyard. The cells are small in size and contain couches, while some, more sybaritic, have besides beds, lockers in the form of small recesses in the wall.

The monastic retreats of the Hinayana phase may be studied at Ajanta Caves 8, 12, and 13. Of these early caves, Cave 12 affords a good example of the early Hinayana cave. The facade of this single-storeyed cave disappeared long ago, but the square hall and the horse-shoe arches are intact. The most impressive intances of the

Hinayana *viharas* are found at Nasik where there are twenty-three caves called Pandu Lena. Three of these caves are *viharas*, and are known as Gautamiputra (No. 3), Nahapana (No.8), and Sri Yajna (No. 15). They were probably hewn in the first century A.D., and are similar in dimensions and in their layout, each consisting of a square hall without pillars, cells on three sides, and a columned portico. The chief feature of these *viharas* is their pillars. In the Nahapana *vihara* the pillars have lotus base and groups of animals above the abacus. The base of the pillars in Gautamiputra *vihara* is concealed behind decorated screen rails. These octagonal pillars carrying sculptures of animals, such as elephants, bulls, and gryphons on their capitals, support a broad architrave.

There are as many as seventeen Mahayana caves at Ajanta executed probably between c. A.D. 450-642. For about two centuries Ajanta was full of the voice of monks and artisans. The earliest of the Mahayana Caves 11, 7, and 6 are transitional in character. The hesitant style is revealed, for instance, in the arrangement of pillars in the central hall which are merely reminiscent of wooden prototypes. The imitative character disappears however, and the arrangement of pillars in the colonnade of the upper storey of *vihara* No. 6 points to a decisive style to be adopted subsequently.

Two fine examples of the Mahayana *viharas* are Nos. 1 and 16. As they are of the same size and dimensions, we describe only one of them—Cave 1 dating from about A.D. 625. The *vihara* has a long portico of 65 feet. The central hall, borne by twenty columns, measures 65 feet square, and has five cells on either side. In consonance with the more lively character of the Mahayana creed the cave is a feast of colour and plastic design. A huge statue of the Buddha, supported on either side by the Vedic deity Indra, may be seen in the shrine. Theologically inadmissible in the Hinayana *vihara*, the Buddhist icon became an essential adjunct to the Mahayana *vihara*. The sides of the doorway of the shrine are carved with the

figures of the Gunga and Jamuna and two snake-hooded guardians. The sculptures on the architrave along the front of the cave, the centre door, and the columns are fine specimens of the workmanship of the Gupta period. Its mural paintings form its chief attraction. Though much mutilated, enough remains to bring all heaven before our eyes.

The Mahayana monasteries at Ellora are divided into two groups. The earlier group, known as the Dhedwada group, consists of five caves (Nos. 1 to 5). A representative of this earlier group is Cave 5 called the Mahanwada *vihara*. It has a large hall besides cells, and is therefore a combination of chapel and monastery like the Ajanta *vihara* described above. This single-storeyed *vihara*, measuring 58½ feet wide by 117 feet deep, is divided longitudinally into a nave and two aisles by twenty-four pillars in two rows. On either side of the cave is a recess borne by two pillars and cells, twenty-three in all. The square cella containing the image of the Buddha is beyond the anteroom. A significant feature of this cave is a pair of low stone benches running parallel to rows of pillars on the wings. The Do Thal or Two Storeys and the Tin Thal or Three Storeys are the only two interesting examples of the second group, that is, Caves 6 to 12. A combination of abbey and residential cells, the Tin Thal or Cave 12 has a fine quadrangle, 108 feet wide and 60 feet deep. The facade of the cave rises in three tiers, each storey being indicated by a portico. The florid interior provides a pointed contrast to the bare exterior. The Do Thal is, in reality, a three-storeyed monastery, and not a two-storeyed one as its name implies. One of its storeys lay buried under the earth until it was discovered in 1876. Though less spacious, it has the same features as the Tin Thal.

THE JAIN CAVES

The Buddhist examples of rock-cut architecture inspired the Hindus

and the Jains to scoop out monastic retreats and places of worship. Early Jain monasteries dating from the second and first centuries B.C. appear some six miles from Bhubaneswar in Orissa on the twin hills of Udayagiri and Khandagiri. The two tree-clad hills are separated from each other by a narrow defile through which passes the road to Bhubaneswar. The coarse-grained sandstone, which forms the rock, is porous and brittle. That it is unsuitable for finished carving, is evidenced by the crumbling state of the ruins. Out of a total of thirty-five caves only seventeen are of importance. The plan of these monastic retreats consists of a bare row of cells with a portico opening into a courtyard. Four of these caves have been carved on two levels. Compared with the Buddhist caves, the Jain caves in Orissa reveal crude workmanship and primitive taste. One of the earliest of these caves, known as the Rani Gumpha also called Rani Naur or Rani Hansapura, is also the largest and most important. This double-storeyed monastery with cells and porticoes on three sides is distinguished by its lavishly sculptured frieze along the walls of the upper storey. Fanciful pillar-brackets, primitive in design, not unlike foliate branches, adorn the Queen's Cave or Rani Gumpha (gumpha=cave). In Manchapuri Gumpha (Cave 9, the lower storey) we can observe pillar-brackets depicting figures riding hippogryphs.

Cruder still in design and execution is the Bagh Gumpha or Tiger Cave (Cave 12). Its three parts—the exterior, the antechamber, and the cell-door—are architectural imitations of a tiger's mask, its gaping mouth, and its gullet. The entrances to some of the hermitages have been shaped like a cobra, a boa constrictor or even a frog. Primitivism apart, these Jain caves, executed under the patronage of king Kharavela of Kalinga, reveal two interesting architectural features: (a) fanciful pillar-brackets ; and (b) semicircular arches resting on pillars crowned by recumbent animals. The horse-shoe arches of the Buddhist monasteries do not appear here.

Located on the northern horn of the ridge at Ellora a few Jain

caves were carved between the eighth and ninth century A.D. Of these five shrines (Nos. 30 to 34), the most notable are the two double-storeyed shrines called the Indra Sabha or Assembly of Indra (Cave 32) and the Jagannatha Sabha or Assembly of Jagannatha (Cave 33). The former is the larger of the two, and shows better workmanship. The plan of the first storey, which consists of a porch, a pillared hall, and a vestibule leading to a cella, is also repeated in the second storey, but the upper storey is better executed and more delicately sculptured. The Jagannatha Sabha shows poor planning as is evident from the unsymmetrical arrangement of the three small sanctuaries on the ground floor. Not in architectural layout, but in their delicate and lavish carvings are these Jain caves remarkable.

The Jain temples at Ellora mark the end of the splendid tradition of the rock-cut architecture in India which for more than a millennium (from the Barabar and Nagarjuni caves 2nd cent. B. C. to the Jain cave at Ellora 8th-9th cent. A.D.) served the religious needs of the people. Yet why did this splendid tradition die ? Three reasons can be adduced. First, the Buddhists and the Jains did not all live near rocky terrains. Hence temples were built in open space exactly in imitation of the *chaityagriha* as at Ter, in Sholapur district, Maharashtra, and at Chezarla in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh. They were Buddhist shrines, later on appropriated by the Hindus. Secondly, the rock-cut caves were built in imitation of wooden construction. The caves mostly contain mortice holes on the facades for fixing wooden frontage. The sloping shafts of the columns and their pot bases as well as wood work on the arched vault of the roofs are all indications of earlier wooden models, and were continued even when they had outlived their purpose. But with growing experience the masons began to assimilate the principles of construction in stone, and as they did so open-air architecture became popular. The Kailasa temple at Ellora can be called a rock-cut temple only with considerable reservations built as it was in exact imitations of masonry.[18]

Thirdly, though both Hindus and the Jains practised rock-cut caves, they accorded better with Buddhist monastic seclusion, and with the disappearance of Buddhism from India they died a natural death.

Cave-architecture, it has been felt, is primitive, architecturally poor, and aesthetically unsatisfying. What beauty can there be in a mere hollow of the rock ? No doubt free-standing architecture offers possibilities of workmanship and skill which a rock-cut cave cannot ; but it may be said in favour of the latter that when properly executed, it can acquire a beauty which is denied to a structure built on open site. The rock-cut *chityagriha*, as at Karli, takes its beauty from the interior ; the exterior is completely forgotten. Surely the Buddhist monk, sitting cross-legged in the Karli *chaityagriha*, endeavouring to fill his mind with Four Sublime Moods—love, compassion, joy, and equanimity—or trying to imagine the supreme state of *Nirvana* was helped by the very atmosphere and twilight of the hall in which "the very walls of the rock seem to melt into an envelope of darkness and the sensation of any kind of space itself becomes unreal."[19]

THE HINDU TEMPLE

DEVOTIONAL THEISM

It sounds curious that the principal form of Hindu architecture, the temple, should be much younger than the corresponding Buddhist architecture which sought expression in the *stupa*, the *chaityagriha*, and the *vihara*. At first sight this appears to be paradoxical, but the late emergence of the temple is quite natural. The Hindu temple is the plastic statement of devotional Hinduism ; it grew out of the theistic movements known as Vaishnavism and Saivism which, though prior to Buddhism in their origin, flowered at a time when Buddhism in India had lost its high moral code, and had become associated with such cults as Tantrism and Sahajiya. When precisely temple worship came into existence could be anybody's guess today in the absence of sufficient historical data. The excavations of the Indus valley civilization have not unearthed any structure which we can identify as a temple. The so-called cloister which surrounds the Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro is too flimsy an evidence to lead us to infer that temple worship existed as far back as c. 2500 B.C. Nor, for that matter, had the Indo-Aryans any temple since the gods they worshipped were not temple-gods. The Vidic gods, such as Mitra (the

Sun), Dyaus (the Sky), Prithvi (the Earth), Vayu (the Wind), and Agni (the Fire), were all personified powers of nature. They were ubiquitous and roamed about the vast expanse of nature, and could be invoked by the priest (the *brahman*) by means of hymns (*mantra*) and sacrifices (*yajna*). The purpose of hymns and sacrifices was, of course, to propitiate the different gods in order to obtain boons from them. In the Vedic society the priests alone knew how to conduct sacrifices faultlessly, and consequently they enjoyed power and position in society.

But Vedic ritualism declined. The priest-dominated Vedic society could satisfy neither the *ksatriya* (the warrior class) ever struggling for power nor the native population, who worshipped indigenous and tutelary divinities. The intellectuals, such as the authors of the *Aranyakas*, found the Vedic way of life to be crude and stilted. A telling passage in the *Chandogya Upanishad* compared the priests to a procession of greedy dogs shouting *Om*, *Om*.[1] The Vedic way of life came in for vigorous criticism in the *Upanishads*, and it was felt that man could attain release (*moksha*) by means of knowledge (*jnana*) without having to master the endless intricacies of barbarous sacrifices. It was about this time that various reforming faiths arose of which the most important were Ajivikaism, Jainism, and Buddhism. All these sects rejected the Vedic way of worship, and introduced effective reform by raising the moral tone of the society. The interpretation of life which they put forward was non-theistic, rational, and metaphysical. In so far as those philosophies were abstract, they could hardly satisfy the emotional urge of the populace. The rational philosophy of life which, for instance, Buddhism (the Hinayana Buddhism) insisted on, appeals to a cultured few ; the common people require a religion less abstract and less intellectual. They require a god who is warm and intimate, and is not too bloodless to be worshipped.

Theism met this requirement. Already by the end of the

second century B.C. the transition from personifications to personal gods was completed, and concrete theistic creeds were developed around the great gods Vishnu and Siva. The inscription on the column of Heliodoros (c. 100 B. C.)[2] at Besnagar indicates that even the yavana of Taxila (Takshasila) was engulfed in devotion to Vasudeva, an earlier form of Vishnu. The devotion to, and worship of, Siva is mentioned in the *Mahabharata*, the great epic by the sage Vyasa, where we are told in the *Bhismaparvan* XI, that the Sakas, the Scyths, were converted to Saivism. Vaishnavism and Saivism were in the beginning known as the Bhagavatas (worshippers of Vasudeva) and the Pasupatas (devotees of Pasupati or Siva). The doctrines of these two sects are found in the *Agamas*, theological treatises and manuals of worship. There are twenty-eight *Agamas* of the Saivites of which the most important is the *Kamika* ; the chief Vaishnavite *Agama* is the *Pancharatra Agama*. Thus the two major sects of Hinduism, which have emerged from the beginning of the Christian era, if not earlier, are Vaishnavism and Saivism, and likewise, the majority of the Hindus have belonged to either sect. In spite of frictions and clashes between these two sects, the Vaishnavites and Saivites are still living happily together, and the syncretic attempt to harmonize Vaishnavism and Saivism by the Hindu Trimurti or Triad—Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer—never really found favour.

VISHNU AND SIVA

Around these two gods, therefore, many religious myths grew up, and they were collected in the Gupta period in the *Puranas* (Ancient Stories). To the Vaishnavite, Vishnu is the Most High ; other gods emanate from him. Vishnu created Brahma, the demiurge, when he was sleeping in the primeval ocean on the thousand-headed

snake Sesha or Ananta. According to the *Puranas*, he is mild and benevolent. He reigns from Vaikuntha, the highest heaven. He has four faces and four arms (sometimes eight) ; the central face is human, while the other three are symbolic of his creative powers, such as knowledge, strength, and splendour. His complexion is dark-blue, and he has a tuft of curly hair on his chest. He wears a holy jewel called *kaustubha* round his neck, and holds in his hands his emblems—the conch, discus, mace, and lotus. Vishnu's spouse is Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity and beauty, whom he obtained, among other divine treasures, from the depth of the primeval ocean. Like other Hindu gods, Vishnu too has a mount, and his mount is the great eagle, Garuda.

From time to time Vishnu incarnates himself to save mankind from destruction. The concept of incarnation in the sense of "the descent of the Lord into the world of men and animals" (*avatara*) is an important concept in Hinduism, and one of its earliest expositions occurs in the *Bhagavad Gita*, wherein Lord Krishna, himself an *avatara* of Vishnu, says :

For whenever of the right
A languishing appears, son of Bharata,
A rising up of unright,
Then I send Myself forth.

For protection of the good,
And for destruction of evil-doers,
To make a firm footing for the right,
I come into being in age after age.[3]

Vishnu incarnated himself many a time. According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, for instance, the "incarnations (of the Lord) are numerous"; but ten chief incarnations of Vishnu are generally accepted by the

Hindus, and they are : Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-lion, Dwarf, Parasurama, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and Kalkin. Of these incarnations, the first six are purely mythical ; the next three are historical, while the last one is yet to come. Appearing as an *avatara* each time, Vishnu performed the dual functions described in the two stanzas. As the Fish *(matsya)*, he saved Manu (man), the Hindu Adam, from the cosmic flood ; as the Tortoise *(kurma)*, he supported on his back Mount Mandara so that it could be used as a churning rod to retrieve divine treasures which were lost in the flood. In the forms of Boar *(varaha)*, Man-Lion *(narasimha)*, and Dwarf *(vamana)* he slew many demons, while as Rama and Krishna he performed many a glorious deed for mankind. The Buddha is the last historical incarnation of Vishnu who was sent to mislead demons and sinners, but in Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* (Songs of the Cowherd), a Sanskrit poem written in the twelfth century, it is mentioned that Vishnu became the Buddha out of compassion for animals slaughtered on the Vedic altars. The last incarnation of Vishnu is Kalkin, the incarnation yet to come. He would come to punish the wicked and reward the good, analogous to the second coming of Christ.

All these incarnations are equally important to Vaishnava faith, but not to all incarnations have temples been dedicated. The most popular and beloved of the incarnations is Krishna. Numerous temples, icons, and songs have grown around him. Rama is another incarnation who is held high among the Hindus. Among the images of Vishnu the most common is the one which depicts him as sleeping on the snake Sesha or Ananta of which a very good example occurs in the Vishnu temple at Deogarh near Jhansi (pl. 6).

To the Saivites Siva is the highest god. Authorities maintain that Siva was evolved from the non-Aryan fertility deity and the Vedic god Rudra. In popular imagination Siva is terrible and severe. He is a destroyer, and disports himself in burning-grounds and dense forests. But according to the Saivite *Agama*, Siva not only destroys,

but also creates and sustains. He is the Lord *(pati)* of the flock *(pasu)*. He offers solace to the sick or sorry world, and one who is devoted to him attains liberation from the bond, the result of ignorance, *karma*, and *maya*. Siva's family consists of his spouse Parvati, the daughter of Himalaya, the mountain-god ; his two sons Karttikeya and Ganesha, and his two daughters Lakshmi (the goddess of fortune) and Sarasvati (the goddess of knowledge). Siva's wife is known by many names, and is worshipped in her own right. In her benevolent aspect she is known as the Great Goddess (Mahadevi, Mahesvari,) the Glorious (Gauri), the Virtuous (Sati), the Bestower of Much Food (Annapurna), Love-eyed (Kamakshi), and the Fish-eyed (Meenakshi). In her maleficent aspect she is known as the Inaccessible (Durga), the Black One (Kali), the Terrible (Bhairavi), and the Fierce (Chandi).

Siva is usually worshipped under the symbol of the phallus or *linga* depicted as a short cylindrical pillar with a rounded top. One of the finest and also the oldest known (first or second century B.C.) Siva *linga* is the Gudimallam *lingam*—a polished reddish five-foot phallic monolith. Siva is sometimes depicted as the Lord of Ascetics, sunk in deep meditation, sitting on the slope of Mount Kailasa in the Himalayas, his body smeared with ashes. He has a third eye in the middle of his forehead which is the symbol of his divine knowledge. His hair is matted, and his necks and arms are cinctured by coiling snakes. Siva is not only an ascetic, but also the Lord of the Dance *(Nataraja)*. One of his famous dances is the *tandava*, the dance which annihilates this earthly pageant. Siva as *Nataraja* is very popular in south India. There are many free-standing sculptures and temple-sculptures and bronzes which depict him in this form. One of the holiest shrines where Siva is worshipped as *Nataraja* is the temple at Chidambaram, while one of the finest sculptures of the dancing Siva in bronze is the one in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

AGAMIC TRADITION AND TEMPLE PLAN

The devotion to Vishnu and Siva does not require either an icon *(arca)* or a temple ; for a god according to theism is a personal being, full of grace and love for his creation. And a devotee by a complete identification with his god can attain liberation or *moksha*.

My self I've rendered up to thee ;
I've cast it from me utterly.
Now here before thee, Lord, I stand,
Attentive to thy least command.

The self within me now is dead,
And thou enthroned in its stead
Yea, this, I, Tuka, testify,
No longer now is 'me' or 'my'.[1]

Thus sang a Maratha saint. To a less spiritually advanced devotee, however, devotion takes the form of worship or *puja*, a word of non-Aryan origin. The ritual of worship is set forth at length in the *Agamic* literatures of both Vaishnavites and Saivites. According to the *Agamic* tradition, a god is worshipped in the form of an icon in a temple, the temple being his dwelling house. To worship is not to pray, and in a Hindu temple, unlike in a Christian church, a devotee does not generally pray to god, though he asks boons of him. A worshipper offers homage to his deity just as he does to a mighty potentate. A god's state is kingly, and thousands at his bidding perform ceremonies to serve him at fixed hours, from morning to night. Flowers, garlands, incense, and swinging lamps are used in such ceremonies. *Agamic* treatises insist on the punctilious adherence to forms and ceremonies. Thus in a temple a god is to be awakened in the moning with ceremonial music ; at the appointed

hour he is to be offered food ; at night he is to be taken to bed. On festal days he is to be taken out in a processional car *(ratha)* with great pomp accompanied by dancers and musicians.

To meet such elaborate ritualistic requirements the need for a suitable temple plan was felt. In the Gupta period the structural requirements of the Hindu temple assumed a norm from which in the subsequent periods of temple history there was a little departure. A Hindu temple is known by such terms as *vimana*, *prasad*, and *mandir*. Inside the temple there is a small dark chamber or cella mounted by a tower or steeple *(sikhara)*. The image of the deity to whom the temple is dedicated is housed in the inner sanctuary known as *garbhagriha* (womb-house) which is entered by a doorway usually on the eastern side. In front of the doorway is the pillared hall or *mandapa* where the devotee with flowers and fruit gathers to pay homage to the deity. A temple may consist simply of a cella mounted by a steeple and a hall. A good example of such a temple is the Visvesvara temple in Banaras. The two parts, the cella and the pillared hall, were in some earlier temples detached buildings as in the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram. But later on a vestibule or *antarala* was added to unite the two parts. Extensions are sometimes added on each side of the pillared hall, and these extensions are called by various names. Another important part of the temple is the covered circumambulatory passage or *pradakshinapatha* provided around the shrine-room.

THREE SPECIFIC TYPES OF TEMPLE

By the end of the Gupta period three distinctive types of temple architecture were finally evolved, and they have been designated as *nagara*, *dravida*, and *vesara* in Hindu architecture. The *vesara* type of temple is distinguished by a barrel roof, and is inspired by the Buddhist

chaityagriha. A good example of the *vesara* type may be found at Ter in Naldrug, near Sholapur, dating from the Gupta period. Originally a *chaityagriha*, built on an open site, it was later on converted into a Vaishnava temple. Two more examples of this type are at Mahabalipuram, called *rathas* of Ganesha and Sahadeva, built in about the seventh century. The *vesara* style also appears in the Vaital Deul at Bhubaneswar in Orissa and in Teli-ka-Mandir, Gwalior. Some authorities apply the term *vesara* to the Chalukya (Hoysala) temples in the Deccan. The *vesara* style did not enjoy wide popularity, and the term *vesara* has fallen into disuse. Of the three types into which Hindu temples clearly divide themselves, the two types, *nagara* and *dravida*, are widely known. The two types vary considerably—pillars, capitals, mouldings differ in each ; but the most distinguishing mark is the tower or *sikhara*. In the *nagara* type the tower is curvilinear and conical in form crowned by a coping stone (*amalaka*) resembling a flat fluted melon which supports an inverted pitcher. In the *dravida* type the tower is pyramidal ascending in a series of horizontal terraces crowned by a conical cap which looks like a miniature *stupa (stupika)*.

The two types of tower had, according to some art historians, different religious affiliations. Thus Havell suggests that in the *nagara* temple "the towering mass of the sikhara type was a symbol of Vishnu's holy mountain"[5], while the pyramidal tower of the *dravida* style was symbolic of Siva worship. But it would be wrong, says he, to accept Fergusson's opinion that the *nagara* type—Fergusson calls it Indo-Aryan—prevailed in the north of India from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas, and the *dravida* type was confined to the south from the Krishna river to the Cape Comorin. Havell's contention that any geographical distribution of the two types is misleading, is now being accepted. And this for two reasons. First, the two styles in course of history have struggled across their respective borders ; and secondly, they have been found to exist side by side as at Pattadakal. The

dravida type is found in the north as far as Ellora, while the *nagara* or Indo-Aryan type has prevailed in the south as at Dharwar on the upper Krishna. The difference in the treatment of the styles cannot, therefore, be explained by regional differences as Fergusson thought.

Nor would sectarianism account for the distinction between the two styles. Thus, for instance, the two adjoining temples on the sea-coast of Mahabalipuram have pyramidal towers leading to the inference that they are Siva temples, but the smaller of the two is not; it is dedicated to Vishnu. Havell explains the point thus: "At the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth century a great Vaishnava movement, headed by Ramanuja, swept over Southern India, and in this period older Saiva temples were appropriated to the Vaishnava cult, and new temples, like the Vaikuntha Perumal temple at Conjiveram (Kanchi), were built according to the Saiva tradition, but dedicated to Vishnu. In the same way the Vaishnava sikhara temples of Northern India were appropriated by the Saiva cult . . ."[6] In order to ascertain therefore whether a temple is dedicated to Vishnu or Siva, we cannot be guided by the tretment of the spire. Our chief guide in this matter, apart from the deity in the Holy of Holies, is the device usually placed on the finial of the spire. A three pronged trident above the spire signifies a Siva temple, while a disc or wheel a Vishnu temple.

THE SPIRE

Since the most conspicuous feature of a Hindu temple is its spire, a word about its origin may not be out of place. In speaking about the spire we should be clear in our mind that its importance is not structural. To the Hindu mind the *sikhara*, signifying a mountain peak, is the symbol of heaven, because the abode of both Siva and Vishnu is the holy Himalayas. The *sikhara* in a Hindu temple is

therefore the facsimile of the mountain peak. Critics have put forward different theories to explain its origin. It has been held that the Indo-Aryan spire was derived from the conical huts of Todas of Southern India. Another view is that it was copied from the old processional car called *ratha*, and since Hindu temples are also called *rathas*—the *rathas* at Mahabalipuram for instance, one feels inclined to accept the hypothesis. Still another view is that it was derived from the *stupa* and the *chaityagriha* which with the passage of time became elongated until it took the form of the *sikhara*. According to the fourth view advanced by Havell, the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian spires existed side by side in the royal tomb at Nineveh, representations of which may be seen on the bas-reliefs of Naram-sin Stele in the British Museum, London.[7] But the most plausible view seems to be the one by Coomaraswamy,[8] recently reiterated by Goetz. According to this view, the spire developed by the piling up of storeys. Goetz puts the matter thus : "It (the spire) developed from the upper storey of the early shrines, through a progressive increase in number (on the average up to 9) and amalgamation of storeys. Those were reduced to mere decorative facades, each with its plinth, wall, cornice and roof ; then the plinths and cornices, and finally the walls as well were eliminated so that only a sequence of innumerable roofs survived, provided first with image niches, then mere dormer windows (*gavakshas*) from which the heads of indeterminate gods looked down. The whole was crowned by a cupola (*sringa*) or a wagon roof (e.g. the Jagesvar temples, Teli-ka-Mandir, Vaital-Deul at Bhuvanesvar, and several temples in Greater India), or by a heavy wheel-shaped stone block (*amalaka*). In the 8th century the outline of the spire became parabolic and its storeys often disappeared completely, being superseded by a maze of dormer windows, now reduced to a meaningless band of ornament."[9]

ARCHITECTURAL CANON

The construction of the Hindu temple was solely governed by the principles laid down in the *Vastusastra*, the science of architecture. Little, if anything, was left to the initiative of the individual architect. Sir Christopher Wren could fall under the spell of the Renaissance Italy and build the famous St. Paul's cathedral, but a Hindu architect knew no such spell. He was enjoined to carry out all the detailed instructions laid down in the manuals of architecture which came to be codified in the Gupta period. These manuals contain exhaustive treatment of every aspect of the temple—names of various temples, the selection of the site, the time when a temple is to be built, the material of which it should be made, the temple plan, laws of proportion, the nature of superstructure, the image to be sculpted for the temple, in fact, every little thing from foundation to fiinal was meticulously laid down. A temple would not be acceptable to the Hindu society if it were not built in accordance with the canonical rules, and no one, not versed in the *Vastusastra*, has any right to engage himself in temple-building. Thus in a treatise on architecture it has been said that "He, who begins to work as an architect without knowing the science of architecture and proud with false knowledge must be put to death by the king as one who ruins the kingdom; dead before his time, his ghost will wander on this wide earth. He, who though well versed in the traditional science is not skilled in the work will faint at the time of action like a timid man on the battle-field. He, who is expert only in his workmanship, but unable to understand the meaning of the traditional science, will like a blind man be misled by anyone."[10]

A temple craftsman, whether a priest-artist or an ordinary mason, was held in high esteem ; and he belonged to a guild which was maintained on a hereditary basis. The apprenticeship was inherited at birth, and in this way knowledge was handed down from generation to generation. Thus there was little scope for individual sensibility

in temple architecture. Among the persons responsible for the construction of a temple, the first in importance is the architect-priest (*sthapaka*). It was expected of him that he should be "a Brahmana of high born family, who has performed all the sixteen purificatory rites, who knows the essence of the sacred texts, the Vedas and Agamas, and who observes the rules of conduct according to his caste (varna) and stage of life (asrama), who has received initiation (diksa), is competent, exerts himself in his work (tapasvin) and is a believer (astika) in the sacred tradition".[11] The architect-priest prepares the plan of the temple, and his injunctions are carried out by four classes of craftsmen (*silpin*) : the designing architect (*sthapathi*), surveyor (*sutragrahin*), sculptor (*taksaka*), and builder-plasterer-painter (*vardhakin*). The plan which the architect-priest prepares is called *vastupurusamandala*, and this takes the form of a square. "The square", says Stella Kramrisch, "is the essential and perfect form of Indian architecture. It presupposes the circle and results from it. Expanding energy shapes the circle from the centre ; it is established in the shape of the square. The circle and curve belong to life in its growth and movement. The square is the mark of order, of finality to the expanding life, its form ; and of perfection beyond life and death."[12] Hindu architects prefer two types of diagrams, one consisting of 64 equal squares, and the other of 81 squares. Of the two, the diagram of 64 squares is meant for the construction of those shrines where *brahmanas* can worship, and is therefore more sacrosanct. In building a temple the Hindu architect is enjoined to carry out all the instructions laid down in the *Vastusastra*. As a result, in this vast country from the Cape Comorin in the south to Badrinath in the north, from the fourth century A.D. till today, temples are marked by a uniformity of plan. Regional differences exist, but the essential form remains.

GUPTA TEMPLES

The Gupta temples dating from the fourth century show the beginnings of the Hindu temple, and analysis of a few surviving temples of the period indicates how it developed from the simple cella-and-porch type into an elaborately complicated structure in the mediaeval period. The temples of the Gupta period show some distinctive features, and they are, according to Percy Brown, as follows : First, even a simple structure of the period would indicate that the style of construction is conceived in terms of dressed stone. No longer does the style of architecture betray imitation of wooden construction. Secondly, the columns of this period, though descended from the Asokan "order", show increasing refinement and complication. Thirdly, intercolumniation, that is, the space between the columns, is treated as an artistic principle. Fourthly, the architrave is continued round the entire temple and finally, decorated doorway makes its appearance.[13]

The earliest and the simplest of the Gupta temples is the one at Sanchi designated as Temple No. 17. It is a single celled shrine with a columned portico. In all later temples the porch in front of the shrine was turned into the *mandapa* where music and dances were provided in honour of the gods. The simple temple at Sanchi bears a striking similarity to the early Egyptian and Greek temples. Other examples of this cella-and-porch type are the Vishnu temple at Tigawa (Jabalpur district) and the Varaha and Vishnu temple at Eran (Gwalior district).

Additions, however, were soon made to the simple cella-and-porch type of temple. First, a roofed cloister around the cella was provided for the purpose of circumambulation. This can be seen in the Parvati temple at Nachna Kuthara, Panna district, Madhya Pradesh ; the Lad Khan temple at Aihole, Bijapur district, Mysore; and at Baigram, Dinajpur district, Bengal (now in Eastern Pakistan). Of these temples,

the Lad Khan temple (named after a Muslim, who lived near it) belonging to A.D. 450 not only illustrates some new features, but also offers an interesting example of a significant structure. Aihole, now an unimportant village, was at one time a busy centre of artistic activity of the Chalukya dynasty of the Deccan. In addition to pillars with heavy bracket capitals and stone seats in portico, the perforated windows have been placed between the side walls of the Lad Khan temple so as to admit sufficient light. The temple has a hall, and the two square groups of pillars in it have provided a double aisle. The plan is unusual; and, as Percy Brown points out, derives its inspiration from the arrangement of the Indian village meeting hall, and not from any previous structural temple. Another temple at Aihole, called Huchchimalligudi temple, though otherwise undistiguished, marks yet another stage of development in the evolution of the Hindu temple. The temple contains an intermediate chamber or *antarala* which became an important feature in all later Hindu temples.

The temples cited above are all examples of the flat-roof type which was given up when the tower over the sanctum came into use. The spire is seen first in the famous Vishnu temple at Deogarh, Jhansi district, and in the brick temple at Bhitargaon, Kanpur district, both in Uttar Pradesh. The Deogarh temple has been admired as one of the gems of Hindu architecture. The temple had a pyramidal tower which was probably forty feet high. Besides its spire over the sanctum, the temple is unique in that the arrangement of its porticoes is novel. Instead of the usual one, it has four porticoes, "each with a flat roof supported on a row of four pillars, with the customary wider intercolumniation in the middle."[14] Another feature of this temple is the ornate doorway (pl. 7). The carvings are refined and sensuous, but not in the sensual manner of Konarak. Sculptural decoration is an integral part of a Hindu temple ; no part of it is left free. The origin of the convention may be seen in the Vishnu temple. Some of the significant features of the carvings are the *maithuna*

(erotic couples) figures on the framework of the doorway, the reliefs of the two holy rivers, Ganga and Jamuna, to right and left at the top of the doorway, and fine foliate details. The basement of the temple, too, is embellished with sculptured friezes depicting scenes from the *Ramayana*. The projecting lintel-cornice above the doorway also appears in the Vishnu temple. And as the feature is found repeated in subsequent temple entrances, its origin may also be ascribed to the Vishnu temple.

The temple at Bhitargaon dating from the fifth century is one of the few surviving examples of architecture in brick. The bricks of the temple measure 17½ x 10 x 3 inches. As the temple is in ruin, it is difficult to make out its shape. Originally perhaps it consisted of a square sanctum and a square hall roofed by a domical vault, but the passage between the two had a barrel vaulted cover. The tall pyramidal superstructure stood on a high plinth. Its exterior was decorated with the blind *chaitya*-arches which relieved the bare brick wall, and added to the grace and comeliness of the temple.

TEMPLES OF ORISSA

A study of temples of Orissa is singularly revealing because the local school, while accepting the Indo-Aryan canon, developed along its own original lines with great vigour. Here, on the east coast of the country temple building activity continued for about five hundred years (A.D. 750 to 1250) in and around the famous city of Bhubaneswar. Now the capital of Orissa, Bhubaneswar was once known as the city of temples. Not far from Bhubaneswar are Puri famous for its temple of Jagannatha (Juggernaut) and Konarak for its magnificent ruin of the Sun Temple or the Black Pagoda.

The temple builders of Orissa used vernacular names for every part of the temple. Thus the two parts into which the Orissan temples

are generally divided are known as the *deul* and the *jagamohan*. The *deul* corresponds to the cella where the icon of the deity is housed, while the *jagamohan* or assembly hall stretches in front of it. The word *deul*, derived from the Sanskrit word *devalaya* or the house of gods, is also applied to the temple as a whole. In addition to the two parts, two other parts were also added, namely, the *natmandir* or dancing hall and the *bhogmandir* or hall of offerings, all four buildings generally built in one line. The Orissan treatises of architecture mention two types of temple architecture : *rekha* and *bhadra*. The *rekha* type can be recognzied by its conical beehive-shaped spire, while the *bhadra* type by the pyramidal roof of varying pitch. Some of the chief features which distinguish the Orissan temples from the rest of the Hindu temples are : (a) the absence of pillars in the halls, (b) severely unadorned interior, and (c) extravagantly lavish exterior. In some temples, however, pillars were used for lending support to the heavy pyramidal roofs, but such examples are rare. The astylar style prevailed, and the ceilings were supported by iron girders.

The important temples of Orissa, following Percy Brown's classification, may be divided into three groups. The first group of temples, put up between c. A.D. 750 and 900, are all situated in the city of Bhubaneswar. The temples are : Parasuramesvara, Vaital Deul, Uttaresvara, Satru Ganesvara, Bharatesvara, and Laksmanesvara. The temples of the second group, constructed between c. A.D. 900 and 1100, include Muktesvara, Lingaraja, Brahmesvara, and Ramesvara in the city of Bhubaneswar and the temple of Jagannatha in the city of Puri. The third group is represented by temples, such as Ananda Vasudeva, Siddhesvara, Kedaresvara, Jamesvara, Maghesvara, Sari Deul, Somesvara, and Rajarani in Bhubaneswar, and the Sun Temple of Kornarak built between c. A.D. 1100 and 1250.

The temples of the first group were largely exploratory. Of the seven temples mentioned above, three are in ruins and four intact. A very good example of the early phase is the temple of Parasurames-

vara which contains all the features of the Orissan temples. It consists of a *deul*, a *jagamohan*, and a beehive spire forty-four feet high. The spire with a wide-fluted coping stone tends to lend an air of squat stockiness, and fails to produce an impression of soaring height and tapering profile which was the objective. The two parts of the temple were put up at different times as is evident from the character of the juncture. Pillars, rare in the later temples, appear in the *jagamohan* in two rows. The exterior of the temple is richly carved, while the interior is bare. Another temple of the early phase is the Vaital Deul. It is two-storeyed with a barrel-roof which indicates that it belongs to the *vesara* type. But it follows from the shape of the spires in each of its corners that the *jagamohan* in front of the cella is Indo-Aryan in its inspiration.

The first mature production of the Orissan style is the Muktesvara belonging to the second phase. The much photographed arched gateway through which the temple is approached is notable for its fine execution and elegant design. Though small in size, 45 feet long, 25 feet wide, and 35 feet high, the Muktesvara temple is a "miniature gem of architecture" (pl. 8). The temple has no pillars inside, but has sculptured decoration, a departure no doubt from the Orissan convention. By far the most significant temple of the second phase is the Lingaraja or the Great Temple of Bhubaneswar built in c. A.D. 1000. It stands at the centre of a large quadrangle, measuring 520 feet by 465 feet, within which may be seen several subsidiary shrines very much in the manner of the later Jain temples at Girnar and Satrunjaya hills in Gujrat. The impressive dimensions, precise planning, the graceful curve of the spire, and a joyous lushness of plastic decoration make the temple a landmark in the history of Hindu temple architecture (pl. 9). The cella (*Sri Mandir*) and the assembly hall of the Lingaraja were constructed earlier than the dancing hall and the hall of offerings. The finest feature of the great Lingaraja is the spire above the *Sri Mandir* which, as Percy Brown happily puts it, "dominates not only

the entire composition, but the whole town of Bhuvaneswar with its height and volume".[15] The spire is a conical beehive-shaped structure. The first fifty feet of the spire is vertical when it begins to curve inwards in order to gain a graceful parabolic curve. The curve finally ends by producing a neck over which rests the wide-fluted coping stone or *amalaka*. The horizontal mouldings and elaborate carvings on the exterior of the spire add to its beauty by relieving the monotony of flatness and by enhancing the upward movement.

The culmination of Orissan architecture was reached in the Sun Temple of Konarak. Built during the reign of Narasimha I, this magnificent but dilapidated temple stands on the sea-coast some twenty miles to the north-east of Puri. As the temple is dedicated to the Sun-god (Surya), it was designed as the architectural replica of the chariot drawn by seven rearing horses corresponding to the prismatic analysis of light in which the Sun-god rides across the heavens. Hence there are twelve intricately decorated wheels, 9 feet 8 inches in diameter, round the platform of the assembly hall and seven curveting horses on either side of its entrance. Originally the temple consisted of a spire, 200 feet high, an assembly hall with a pyramidal roof, and a detached dancing hall.

The temple of Konarak has become an object of fiery polemics on account of its erotic sculptures which decorate the exterior of the temple. The figures of couples embracing each other or *in coitu* have provoked the entire gamut of aesthetic emotion, from profound admiration to horrified repugnance. Thus it has been argued that these sculptures have been carved according to the recipes of *Kamasutra*, a treatise on erotics written perhaps by the sage Vatsyayana. According to another view, these pairs in dalliance represent the world of flesh, and have been sculpted to heighten by contrast the things spiritual symbolized by the unadorned interior. But such an interpretation based on the commonplace Christian concept of the dichotomy of flesh and spirit could hardly apply to

these erotic sculptures as it is alien to the Hindu view of life. Carnal love was not looked down upon by the Hindu. On the contrary, the consummation of the sexual act was looked upon as union with the divine. The deification of the sexual act gained wide currency in the early centuries of the Christian era when creation was conceived as the sexual union between gods and goddesses. The genesis of this view may be traced to the later "Vedic age" (between c. 1000 and 700 B.C.). According to the mythical description given in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the *Purusa* or the primeval person in his loneliness cleft himself into two thus producing a wife. Thereupon he had sexual commerce with her, and therefrom human beings were produced. Hence the figures of couples became part of the religious sculptures from the Gupta period. A good example of the early use of the *maithuna* figures may be seen on the doorway of the Vishnu temple at Deogarh (pl. 7). But there is a difference between the sculptures of the *maithuna* figures of Konarak and those of the Vishnu temple. At Konarak the accent is so emphatically on the voluptuous and amorous antics (pl. 10) that one feels that the very sophistication of the erotic motif has succeeded in making religion the scapegoat for degenerate eroticism.

Another example of the second phase of the Orissan style is the world famous Jagannatha temple at Puri. Its fame rests more on its holiness than on its architectural beauty. Modelled on the same plan as the Lingaraja, the Jagannatha has neither the grandeur nor the plasticity of the former. Moreover, successive restorations have made the temple gain little in beauty. It stands within an enclosure measuring 440 feet by 350 feet. Originally it consisted of a cella and an assembly hall ; the *natmandir* and the *jagamohan* bear ample evidence of being a later accretion.

The temples of the third phase are different from those of the second phase in that they are more baroque and less massive in conception and execution. One reason why they are much smaller in

size is that most of the temples have two buildings—the *deul* and the *jagamohan*—, and not four. An exquisite example of the third phase is the temple of Rajarani. Unfortunately it was left unfinished, but at least the *deul* is complete. The remarkable feature of the Rajarani temple is its spire which bears close resemblance to the spires of the Khajuraho temples.

KHAJURAHO TEMPLES

The temples of Khajuraho came to be built during the heyday of the Chandellas, a Rajput tribe, who ruled over Jejakabhukti, the modern Bundelkhand, from the ninth to thirteenth centuries A.D. Khajuraho was at that time known as Kharjuravahaka (the date bearing tree). Possibly at one time it was the capital of the Chandellas. Of the eighty-five temples which were once extant, only twenty are standing today. These temples are dedicated to Siva, Vishnu, and the Jain patriarchs. Most of these temples were built of buff-coloured sandstone quarried from Panna, not far from Khajuraho. The temples of Khajuraho are usually divided into three groups, namely, west rn, eastern, and southern. Eleven out of twenty temples belong to the western group. They are : Chaunsat-Yogini, Lalguan Mahadeva, Kandariya Mahadeva, Mahadeva, Devi Jagadambi, Chitragupta (Bharatji), Visvanatha and Nandi, Parvati, Laksmana (Ramachandra or Chaturbhuja), Matangesvara, and Varaha. The eastern group includes three Hindu temples known as Brahma, Vamana, and Javari ; and three Jain temples—Ghantai, Adinatha, and Parsvanatha—while two temples, the Duladeo and the Chaturbhuja (Jatkari), comprise the southern group.

The characteristics of the Khajuraho school may be illustrated by the Kandariya Mahadeva temple—one of the finest Hindu shrines in India. The very first thing that strikes a visitor is that, quite unlike

an Orissan temple, this Siva temple stands on a high basement without any enclosure. Moreover, the visitor misses here the enormous size of the Orissan temple. The famous Jagannatha of Puri is 310 feet x 80 feet x 200 feet, whereas the Kandariya Mahadeva measures 102 feet 3 inches in length, 66 feet 10 inches in width, and 101 feet 9 inches in height. Though not large, it is much more unified architecturally than, say, Lingaraja or Jagannatha temple. In the latter the main parts form a group of connected separate buildings, and therefore do not form that architectural compactness which one perceives in the Kandariya Mahadeva. The Kandariya Mahdeva is a single building, a unified whole, and its six parts, viz., the cella, the assembly hall, the entrance portico, the vestibule, the transpets and the circumambutatory passage are not mechanically juxtaposed, but are co-ordinated into an integrated pattern.

The architectural skill is nowhere more marked than in the facade of the temple, particularly in its curvilinear central spire (pl. 11). The *sikhara* is an architectural replica of a mountain, with its peaks, big and small, all converging on to the highest pinnacle. That it should be so is fitting, because the temple being dedicated to Siva, the spire was made to appear like Mount Kailasa, Siva's abode, with its many flanking peaks (*sringas*). The height of the temple, as we have already noticed, is about half of that of the Jagannatha, and is determined by the three component parts of the temple: the high terrace, the walls, and the spire mounting in stages. But by a deft manipulation of these parts the architect has created an optical height which appears much greater than the actual height. The skill is noticed most conspicuously in the construction of the superstructure. Just as in a Gothic church, the tower, often crowned with spires, accentuates the verticality, and leads the eye upwards, so does the spire of the Kandariya Mahadeva. This was achieved by the skilful groupings of the minor spires or *urusringas*, and the centripetal movement towards the main tower which is thus hinted gives us a feeling that

the main tower is ascending higher and still higher. The skil disposition of the miniature towers rising at successive levels inve, the main tower with an upward thrust, and this also intensifies t height. Further, the graduated rise and fall of the minor tow makes the main tower recede backward, and the illusion of recessi enhances the optical experience of a central peak surmounting smal' ones.

Like the Orissan temples, the Khajuraho temples also puls with vivid pageantry of sculptures; but while decoration in the Oriss temples is restricted to the outside wall, at Khajuraho both exteri and interior are sumptuously decorated. In the Kandariya Mahade temple, for instance, there are a few hundred sculptures. All forr of sculptured figures—animal, human, and celestial, beautiful ai bizarre, charming and repellent—are represented here as a reflecti of the wide catholicity of its builders. The principle sculptures Khajuraho temples are those of *ashtadikpalas* (the regents of ' eight quarters of the globe), *apsaras* and *surasundaris* (divine nymph *maithunas* (erotic couples), *vidyadharas* (flying celestials), ai *mayikas* (heroines). The sculptures of Khajuraho are often mo tender and warm-hearted than those of Orissa. Moreover, th challenge attention in a manner hardly associated with the som what confusing sculptures of Orissa. Referring to the double tier graceful *apsaras* of the Vamana temple Stella Kramrisch has sai "With every movement of the eye of the beholder a new perspecti shows the images from a different angle ; to avoid being bewilder he has to concentrate on each of them, facing it, and then give l attention to the next."[16]

OTHER INDO-ARYAN TEMPLES

Together with the development of the Indo-Aryan temp

architecture at Bhubaneswar, Konarak, and Puri in Eastern India and Khajuraho in Central India, in many places in Western India the regional style of temple building acquired a distinctive character ; but most of those temples had succumbed to the iconoclastic attentions of the Muslim raiders. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1026 initiated this move on the famous temple of Somnatha on the southern coast of Gujrat during the reign of Bhimdeva I, the Solanki king of Gujrat. This explains why there are fewer temples standing in the North than in the South which owing to the distance received fewer visitations. Almost nine out of every ten Hindu temples were destroyed, and those that escaped destruction were either converted into mosques or used as material for the construction of new ones. A good example of such conversion is the Quwwatu'l-Islam Mosque in Delhi built by Qutb-ud-din Aibak to mark the glory of Islam. The shafts, capitals, and architraves of this mosque belong to Hindu temples. However, from the examples of those temples which escaped the raids of the Muslims, it is evident that powerful regional styles of temple architecture developed in Gwalior, Rajasthan, and Gujrat.

Gwalior was an important centre of temple building in the eleventh century. Among the temples may be mentioned the Great and the Small Sas-Bahu temples dedicated to Vishnu and the Teli-ka-Mandir. The Great Sas-Bahu temple is not entire, as the sanctum with its spire has disappeared. The assembly hall remains however, and viewed from outside it appears to be a three-storeyed building, each storey being distinguished by an architrave. But in reality it is a single-storeyed hall when viewed from the interior. The hall is spacious, but its spaciousness is cut up by four gigantic stone piers used for supporting the superstructure. The Teli-ka-Mandir has been called a shrine rather than a temple, because it contains only a sanctuary. The spire above the cella is barrel-vaulted (pl. 12), and therefore the Teli-ka-Mandir belongs to the *vesara* type.

The Rajasthan temples acquired a distinctive style. Usually they

consist of five buildings including the shrine-house. They are, therefore, called *panchayatana*. The plinths of these temples stand on a high platform as in the Khajuraho temples, while the spires bear a striking resemblance to those of the early temples at Bhubaneswar. Some fine samples of Rajasthan temples may be seen in the village of Osia near Jodhpur. The finest of this group is the one dedicated to the Sun-god (*Surya*), dating from the tenth century. Although the four adjoining shrines have crumbled off, what little remains displays the Gupta tradition of temple architecture at its best.

Most of the ruined temples of Gujrat were built between the tenth and thirteenth centuries while India was passing into the hands of the Sultans of Delhi. Under the Solanki dynasty Gujrat was a flourishing commercial region, and the bejewelled images of gods and goddesses of Gujrat temples symbolized the "wealth of Ind" to the minds of the Muslim invaders. Jewel wealth apart, the temples of Gujrat have considerable architectural interest. The exterior of the Gujrat temples is divided horizontally into three parts : the moulded basement or *pitha*, the wall up to the entablature or *mandovara*, and the roof with its spire. The interior is noted for its peristyle layout, while the steeple for its clustered turrets. Among the best preserved temples in Gujrat is the Surya shrine at Mudhera.

ONE JAIN TEMPLE

Jainism flourished along with Buddhism. Strictly speaking, Jainism is not so much a religion as a monastic organization. The founder of this organization was Vardhamana, commonly known by his title Mahavira (c. 540-468 B.C.). The Jains share most of the rituals with the Hindus. They believe in castes and acknowledge Brahmins as priests. It is curious that from a very early period Jainism should have appealed to the mercantile community, and

today the majority of the Jains, who are about two millions in number, are merchants and business men chiefly residing in the trade centres of Western India and Rajasthan. During the times of the Mauryas and and the Guptas Jainism throve from Orissa in the east to Mathura in the west, but in the mediaeval age it concentrated in Gujrat and parts of Rajasthan, in Mysore, and in south Hyderabad. Like the Buddhists, the Jains in the beginning believed in the cult of *stupas*, but in the early years of the first century A.D. they gave up the cult of *stupa* in favour of temple worship. The Jains built temples and made icons. The most important Jain sanctuaries, besides the two on the Mount Abu in Rajasthan, are to be found on the Girnar and Satrunjaya hills in Gujrat, Ranpur in Jodhpur, Parasanatha in Bihar, and Sravana Belgola in Mysore. All these temples were raised in the mediaeval period.

From the architectural point of view the Jain temples are not essentially different from the Hindu temples. The two temples at Dilwara on the Mount Abu, the Vimala (eleventh century) and the Tejahpala (thirteenth century), for instance, have hardly any architectural feature which is distinctive of Jainism. Architecturally, they belong to the Gujrat tradition of Hindu temple building. One critic has described these Jain sanctuaries as "the final baroque culmination of the Gujrat style."[17]

The Vimala Vasahi temple was built by the banker Vimala Sah, and is dedicated to Rishabhanatha or Adinatha, the first Tirthankar (chief saint) of the Jain faith. The temple is built entirely of white marble, and its interior is richly carved, though its exterior is plain and austere. The interior of this temple has, what Fergusson calls, "the lace-like delicacy of the fairy forms into which the patient chisel of the Hindu has carved the white marble."[18] In spite of its great beauty, however, one gets a feeling of dull perfection when one looks at it—a point noted by visitors and critics alike. On plan the temple is a rectangular open court surrounded by chapels exactly like those

in the Buddhist monasteries. The chapels are lighted only from the door, and within each chapel will be found the cross-legged figure of the saint to whom the temple is dedicated. A double arched passage, consisting of two hundred and thirty-two pillars, surrounds these chapels, every four pillars constituting a portico to a chapel. In the middle of the court stands the temple measuring 98 feet by 42 feet. It consists of a portico, a vestibule, and a shrine.

The chief feature of the portico is the octagonal enlcosure which supports a dome rising in eleven concentric rings (pl. 13). The dome has been praised for its exquisite delicacy. "Looking up at this ceiling", says Benjamin Rowland, "is to behold a dream-like vision looming in the half-light, like some marvellous underwater formation in coral and mother-of-pearl."[19] Architecturally, however, the dome is far from impressive. First, the thin and short supporting pillars accentuate the disproportionate massiveness of the dome ; and secondly, too many sculptures crowd out the steps of the corbelling dome. In effect, the dome may be admired as an isolated piece of sculpture, but not in relation to its architectural design.

TWO CAVE-TEMPLES

A famous Hindu temple dedicated to Siva was built at Ellora in the Deccan under the patronage of the Rashtrakuta kings. The dynasty of the Rashtrakuta controlled the Deccan from A. D. 757 to 973 after the fall of the first Chalukyan power. The temple, called the Kailasa, begun by Krishna I perhaps to please his patron deity, who helped him to gain control over the Deccan, was completed by his successors. This tempie is generally cited as an example of cave-temple or rock-cut architecture ; but the temple is, to all intents and purposes, a structural temple scooped out of a sloping hill-side. The Buddhist rock-cut sanctuaries are covered by rock on

all the three sides, but the Kailasa is not (pl. 14). It is a daring departure from the tradition of rock-cut architecture.

The Kailasa was built in imitation of the structural Hindu temple, not the Buddhist shrines. Architecturally, it bears resemblance to the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal which was not far from Badami, the capital of Krishna I. But though a work of imitation, this Siva temple surpasses its model in all respects ; in proportion, harmony, and unity. In fact, this marvellous temple remained for all time to come the perfect model of the great temples of south India. In the words of Havell, "The design of all the great temples of Southern India is always based upon the Kailasa type, even when Vishnu instead of Siva is worshipped, as in the Vaikuntha Perumal temple Conjiveram and the Vitthalaswami temple at Vijayanagar, with variations dictated by the necessities of the site or the other practical considerations."[20]

The main body of the temple is approximately 150 feet by 175 feet. The construction was begun first by cutting down three trenches at right angle which provided to the builder a block of stone 200 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 100 feet high. Next the work began from the top and front of this rock for the sanctuary. The work of the architects and sculptors proceeded simultaneously. In the scooped out hollow of the rock in the middle was housed the double-storeyed temple. The four parts, viz., the sanctuary, the entrance gateway to the west, a *nandi* shrine, and the cloisters around the shrine make up the plan of the Kailasa. The parts form a complete unity. Entering through the spacious double-storeyed gateway, one comes to the *nandi* shrine—a beautiful pavilion, 20 feet square, standing on a high plinth. On either side of the shrine stand two free-standing monoliths or *dhvajastambhas*, 51 feet high, bearing Siva's trident. The *nandi* shrine is connected by a bridge with the pillared hall measuring 70 feet by 62 feet. The hall has sixteen square pillars in groups of four each at the four corners. The square or polygonal base, the octagonal shaft,

and the cushion type of capital indicate that the columns belong to the Dravidian 'order'. Beyond the pillared hall is the vestibule which leads to the cella. The tower above the cella is ninety-five feet high, and is pyramidal in structure. Critics have noted its close resemblance to the five-storeyed tower of the Dharmaraja *ratha* at Mahabalipuram. Around the base of the tower are grouped five shrines after the model of the main shrine. These shrines are dedicated respectively to Ganesha (the god of worldly reason,) Rudra (Siva as the Universal Destroyer), Parvati (the spouse of Siva), Chanda (the scavenging deity), and Saptamatri (the Seven Mothers of Creation).

The plastic decoration of the Kailasa is no less important. The sculptures depict the episodes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* with dynamism and grace. "In these", says Stella Kramrisch, "the southern element is absorbed by the tradition of the Dekhan. The slender type of the body, with its easier and quickened gestures, is assimilated by the heavier form of the Dekhan with its sustained power.'"[21] We may cite by way of illustration of the grace and the dynamism of the Kailasa sculptures the famous relief of Ravana shaking Mount Kailasa. The demon-king, with his ten heads and twenty arms, is represented as attempting to uproot Mount Kailasa, the abode of Siva, in order to use it in his war against Rama. The violence of his threat and the convulsion that it produces frightens Parvati, who holds her lord's arm for protection, while Siva sits serene and utterly unconcerned. He presses the demon-king into the cavern of the mountain by his outstreched feet. This dramatic relief depicts varieties of moods and sentiments with both power and grace which makes it one of the most powerful works of sculpture.

Besides the Kailasa, which is a class by itself, we have at Ellora sixteen other Hindu cave-temples. Architecturally, these temples have been classified into three groups. The first group represented by the Dasavatara or Ten Incarnations of Vishnu, is built in imitation of the Buddhist cave-monastery having a pillared portico and a cella.

Ravana-ka-khai or the Abode of Ravana, noted for its fine *nandi* pavilion, is a good example of the second group. It is distinguished from the Dasavatara in that it has a passage for circumambulation about the shrine. The third group is represented by Dhumar Lena, which perhaps served as a model of the cave-temple at Elephanta, Bombay.

The cave-temple on the island of Elephanta, contemporary with the Kailasa at Ellora, is famous for its sculptural achievment. This small island was called Elephanta by the Portuguese on account of a stone elephant which once stood on it. The temple at Elephanta was severely damaged by the Portuguese, and the stone panel which bore inscription and perhaps the date of its construction is now lost. Fergusson attributes it to the late eighth or early ninth century A.D., while Havell thinks that the temple was put up earlier than the eighth century. The temple stands at a height of 250 feet above the sea and faces the north. The pillared hall is roughly ninety feet square with six rows of pillars. The three entrances (the north, east, and west) of the temple form a cruciform type. The cushion capitals of the pillars indicate their similarity to those at Ellora. The interior is noted for its sculptures, depicting the legends of Siva. In such sculptures as the Marriage of Siva and Parvati, the Ardhanarisvara (androgynous divinity), the Nataraja, and above all the Trimurti, the sculptural tradition of the Western Deccan reaches its highest plastic expression. The last named sculpture has been the subject-matter of endless commentaries. Its iconographic significance, too, has been variously interpreted. We notice this awe-inspiring sculpture of the Saivite Trinity in the south wall, recessed in a deep hollow, as we enter from the north. The sculpture is nineteen feet high, and it represents Siva in his triune aspect of creator, destroyer, and preserver. Commenting on this sculpture Havell wrote, "It is difficult to compare the magnificent sculpture of Elephanta temple with any of the masterpieces of the West, for it belongs to a plane of aesthetic

thought, not entirely peculiar to India, but one in which Indian artists were supreme. Greek art had its centaurs, fauns, and satyrs, and its pantheon of deified heroes, but left the profoundest mysteries of creation to the speculation of philosophers. Egyptian art, marvellous as it is, can only be regarded from a philosophic standpoint as glorified totemism. Indian philosophy, rising to a far higher intellectual plane, seems to take the monumental art of Egypt at the point where it stopped short, and to raise it, with an equivalent power of technical expression, to the loftiest heights ever yet attained by human thought. The mystics of India reconciled the aims of the artist and philosopher, which Greece and Italy were content to regard as belonging to different planes of thought."[23]

THE CHALUKYAN STYLE

The development of temple architecture in south India took two different directions ; one in the west and the other in the east. In the east the Dravidian style prevailed, in the west the Chalukyan style. The term "Chalukyan style" has apparently been invented by the critics to designate those temples which came to be built under the patronage of the Chalukya kings, who ruled first from Badami and then from Kalyani, the land known as the Deccan, lying between the Vindhya mountains and the Tungabhadra river. The Chalukyas first came to power in c. A.D. 550 after the downfall of the Andhra or Satavahana dynasty. In A.D. 757 they, in their turn, were overthrown by the Rashtrakutas. A second Chalukya dynasty supplanted the Rashtrakutas in A.D. 973, and reigned in the Deccan until the end of the twelfth century, when their empire was carved out among three dynasties. Of the three dynasties, the most important from our point of view is the Hoysalas of Dorasamudra (now called Halebid) in Mysore. The Hoysalas (c. A.D. 1110-1327) were great builders and, in

fact, it is under the patronage of the Hoysala kings that the Chalukyan style reached its ultimate pitch. Hence many scholars prefer to designate it as Hoysala style. Sometimes the term *vesara* is also used to describe the style, but it has not found favour among critics of Indian architecture.

The Chalukyan or Hoysala style is said to be an admixture of the Indo-Aryan and the Dravidian styles, but the latter strikes the dominant note. The influence of the Indo-Aryan canon is mainly found in the adaptation of the spire of the Chalukya temples. The beginning of the Chalukyan style is found at Aihole, Badami, and Pattadakal during the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries. The earliest Chalukya temples are mainly imitative in character. By the eighth century the Chalukya temples had developed many individual features including the wide over-hanging eaves which marked them off from the temples of the other regions. In respect of the disposition of various parts the Chalukya temples were not different from others, and the temples that came to be built under the patronage of Hoysala kings consisted of a cella with a vestibule in front known as *sukhanasi* which was connected with a pillared hall or *navaranga*. In front of the hall there was often another open pillared hall, the *mukhamandapa*. Generally Hoysala temples were built in duplicate. Examples of triplicate, quadruplicate, and quintuplicate are also found. In elevation the temples are relatively lower than those of the other regions, in extension wider. The impression of lower elevation is further accentuated, because platforms and walls of these temples are full of narrow carved friezes of elephants, horsemen, geese, hippopotamus-like creatures (*yali*), and mythological scenes. The material of most of the Hoysala temples was fine soapstone which admitted of minute carving more easily than heavy sandstone or granite. Other conspicuous features of these temples are intricate grill windows, turned columns, and low pyramidal towers. Some of the temples at Halebid and Belur have

no towers at all, while those which have, the Kesava temple at Somnathpur for instance, do not produce an impression of height. Though they rise above the projecting cornice or eave in diminishing horizontal tiers, the height is reduced by making each tier shorter.

The finest examples of the Chalukyan or Hoysala style are the Chennakesava temple at Belur, the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, and the Kesava temple at Somnathpur. The Chennakesava temple was erected by the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana, and stands inside a court measuring 360 feet by 440 feet. Like the other temples of the Hoysala style, the temple is polygonal or stellate on plan. It stands on a platform of three feet high of the same shape as the temple, and measures 178 feet by 156 feet. The Chennakesava temple is to be appraised from within, for the exterior in the absence of a spire appears to be more dwarfish than it actually is. The interior can be approached through three entrances from the east, north, and south. The most interesting feature of the interior is the hall with its forty-six pillars. It occupies an area of 92 feet by 78 feet, but one does not feel the spaciousness of the hall because of closely set pillars and profuse decoration. The effect is one of crowding. Sculpture rather than architecture holds us at every turn. One vainly looks for structural beauty. As we look at these carvings, we realize that the builders left the empty space for the sculptor to fill in. A notable feature of the Chennakesava temple is the emphasis given to the pillars of the hall. These pillars, except the four in the central bay, are conceived and designed differently, and are fully carved from top to bottom. One of these pillars stands out so conspicuously that it is known by the special appelletion of Narasimha pillar. The pillars apart, the ceilings are also carved. Except the central ceiling all the others are flat. The central ceiling stands on an octagonal base over which is raised a dome. Unlike the true dome, it is not constructed of voussoirs with radiating joints, but has risen in concentric rings from the centre of which hangs a pendant. The

bracket figures, known as *madanakai* figures, typical of the Hoysala style, abound in the Chennakesava temple. In execution and finish they are unparalleled. There were forty such figures, but two of them are now missing. A typical example is the figure of a girl with a mirror (pl. 15).

The thirteenth century Kesava temple of Somnathpur is another fine example of the Hoysala style. The temple consists of three shrines, and stands within a cloisterd court measuring 215 feet by 177 feet. On plan the temple is in the shape of a cross. Though the temple is in triplicate, it is not a large one, as the total area it occupies is only 87 feet by 83 feet. The Kesava temple is complete in every respect ; it is well-proportioned and well-balanced (pl. 16). The towers of this temple, even though horizontally divided from the base by overhanging eaves, escape a stunted impression, as their height, thirty feet only, is in keeping with the rest of the building. The temple has one entrance through the east which leads us to the main hall measuring 41 feet long and 30 feet wide. At the western end of the hall are the three shrines with their spires disposed in a way that produces the cruciform effect.

The Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid, some fifty miles north-west of Mysore, is a combination of two shrines. Unfortunately the temple leaves a sense of incompleteness, because it lacks the superstructure. The plan of the temple is simple: two shrines of identical size (112 feet by 100 feet) joined by their adjacent transepts. Each shrine consists of two compartments—the pillared hall and the sanctuary. In front of the temples are the *nandi* pavilions. But the temple is unsymmetrical as the two *nandi* (Siva's mount) pavilions vary in size and proportion. The characteristic of the Hoysalesvara temple is its astonishing display of sculptural decoration. The four doorways, their long lintels, the interior, and the exterior are all over-laden with lush detail. The three parallel panels running round the exterior walls are specially noteworthy. The tier at the bottom comprising

the basement contains figures of animals, such as elephants, lions, and geese. The central tier is occupied with figures of deities, while the third tier "is treated in a more formal manner, as it is mainly architectural in its character, consisting of niches and canopies, mouldings and pilasters, and all shaded by a heavy projecting cornice or eave."[23]

THE DRAVIDIAN STYLE

That which we call the Dravidian style of temple architecture flourished in South India from the basin of the Krishna to the Cape Comorin, the area where Tamil culture prevailed. While in the North Hindu culture began to show signs of decline after the Gupta age, in Tamil land it still retained signs of vigour, and by the middle of the seventh century it put forth new leaves on every branch. The contact with the North, the penetration of Aryan culture into the South, did not mean an abject surrender of the Tamil culture. Sanskrit, which became the court language, did not oust the vernacular Tamil. At no stage of her history was the South completely Aryanised. On the contrary, it absorbed a great deal from the North, enriched itself, and gave back what it took with the generous feeling of debt repaid. In fact, our indebtedness to the South has been considerable. In literature, in music, in dancing, and in arts the contribution of the South has been extensive. In religion also it made a marked contribution. During the early seventh century *Nayanars* (teachers) and *Alvars* (saints) aroused a passionate devotion to Siva and Vishnu, and the whole of the South was in ferment. The worship of primitive gods accompanied by bloody sacrifices was replaced by a higher religion. Buddhism and Jainism, too, disappeared ; and as in the North, so in the South devotional and mystical Hinduism struck root.

The beginning of the Dravidian style of temple architecture synchronizes with the conversion of the southern people to devotional

mysticism—the highest point reached in the evolution of the Indo-Aryan faith. The great mediaeval temples of South India show a humble beginning with rock-cut architecture constructed under the Pallava dynasty (c.A.D. 600—900). The early rock-cut temples are usually divided into two groups—the pillared halls or *mandapas* and the monolithic shrines known as *rathas*. The former, put up by King Mahendravarman I, are found scattered in the North Arcot and Tiruchirapalli districts in Madras State. These shrines consisted of a cubical cell with a pillared hall in front, supported by thick square pillars. The *mandapa* of Mahendravarman I shows interesting developments, and Jouveau-Dubreuil, an authority on the Pallava architecture, made intelligent use of them to fix the chronology of the rock-cut shrines. The early shrines, for instance, lacked cornice above the pillars, the middle added them, while the later ones have not only a roll-cornice, but also an ornamental *chaitya-arch* known as the *kudu-motif.* About this time, too, the Pallava 'order', with its lion motif, first noticed in the shrine at Bhairavakonda in Nellore district (Andhra Pradesh), began to appear.

It is not the *mandapas*, however, but the rock-cut shrines found at Mahabalipuram which have more significance in the development of Dravidian temple architecture. In them the Pallava style began to emerge gradually but surely, and they, therefore, set the tone of later temples. These rock-cut shrines are called *rathas*, because it was felt that a shrine was an architectural imitation of a *ratha* or chariot in which gods are transported on festal days. These shrines are also described as Seven Pagodas, a term coined by the English mariners of the East India Company. There are eight *rathas* at Mahabalipuram of which five are named after the five Pandava brothers of the *Mahabharata.* Among these shrines the Draupadi *ratha* is the least important architecturally. Dedicated to the polyandrous wife of the Pandavas, this small shrine contains one cell constructed after the manner of a hermit's hut having an overhanging curvilinear roof. The

structure of the other shrines bears a marked similarity to that of the Buddhist *vihara* and *chaityagriha*. A typical example is the shrine of Dharmaraja, the largest of the *rathas*. The ground storey of this shrine is square and the spire above is pyramidal. It rises in three successive tiers attaining a height of forty feet (pl. 17). A bulbous *stupika* or a small *stupa* crowns the top of the spire. The *stupika* is also found repeated in miniature scale on the lower levels of the structure. The columns in the portico belong to the Pallava 'order' having lions as support to the shafts.

The monolithic shrines were the work of the great Pallava king Narasimha, who died probably in A.D. 674. He was followed by Rajasimha or Narasimha II under whose patronage the Pallava structural temple began. Of the six temples attributed to him, three stand out prominently. One of these is the Shore Temple at Mahabalipuram near which can be seen the famous relief of the Descent of the Ganga. Structurally, the Shore Temple bears similarity to the Dharmaraja *ratha*, as both of them have a square lower storey and a pyramidal roof rising in diminishing tiers, but aesthetically the former is more elegant and more rhythmic in expression. This is easily felt by a comparison of the spires, that of the Dharmaraja *ratha* being dwarfish and stunted. The tower of the Shore Temple, on the other hand, with its accent on verticality, and its more proportionate distribution of the *stupika*, is slender and graceful (pl. 18). The site, too, enhances the attenuated beauty of the tower. Situated in the romantic sorroundings of the beach, the twin towers of the Shore Temple stand majestically against the background of the tumultuous sea.

The two other examples of the Pallava temples are the Kailasanatha and the Vaikunthaperumal at Conjeeveram or Kanchipuram, the capital of the Pallavas, some forty-five miles south-west of Madras. The Kailasanatha temple, also called Raja Simhesvara temple, dates from c. A.D. 700. This temple is reported to have inspired the Chalukya king Vikramaditya II to build the famous

Virupaksha temple at Pattadakal. The Kailasanatha temple consists of a sanctuary, a pillared hall, a surrounding rectangular courtyard, and a pyramidal tower. On the exterior of the temple can be seen the rampant lion pilaster. The tower takes its cue from the Dharmaraja *ratha*, while the gateways of the temple suggest the beginning of the *gopuram* (tower on the gateway), a typical feature of the later Dravidian style. The Pallava structural style attains its culmination in the Vaikunthaperumal temple which is at once larger and more complete than the Kailasanatha.

The death in A.D. 897, of Aparajita, the last Pallava king, was the beginning of the Chola dynasty (c. A.D. 900-1150). The Chola kings ruled for some three hundred years in the region around Tanjore and Tiruchirapalli districts, Madras State, but their power under the two powerful kings Rajaraja I (A.D. 985-1014) and Rajendra I (A.D. 1014-1042) extended from the mouth of the Ganga in the north to Ceylon in the south. The Chola kings were prolific temple builders, and under them the Pallava temple tradition throve. We owe to these two two famous temples : the Brihadisvara temple in Tanjore and the Siva temple at Gangaikondacholapuram, some thirty-eight miles north-east of Tanjore.

The Chola temple builders retained the Pallava structural plan, but introduced many new features, chief of which is the construction of the main tower. The tendency of the period was to build lofty towers. The tower of the Brihadisvara temple, for instance, is 190 feet high. Consisting of three parts—a square vertical base about 50 feet high, a tall pyramidal structure comprising thirteen diminishing tiers, and a domical finial—, this grand tower stands today as a silent witness to the might and splendour of the great Chola king, Rajaraja I (pl. 19). Another feature of the Chola temple is the hall supported by carved pillars. In them, and not in the *mandapa* of the Pallava structural temple, do we see the beginning of the "thousand pillared halls" which lend distinction to the Dravidian temples. The

many-pillared hall of the Chola temple is best displayed in the temple at Gangaikondacholapuram built by Rajendra I. The *mandapa* of the temple measures 175 feet by 95 feet, and consists of over 150 pillars. Another new feature of the period is the disappearance of the Pallava lion-motif from the pillars. It was replaced by gryphon-heads, a decorative motif retained in the subsequent Dravidian temples.

In the thirteenth century the Chola power declined, and their kingdom was divided between the Hoysalas of Mysore and the Pandyas of Madurai. To the Pandya dynasty (c. A.D. 1150-1350) the Hindu temples of the South owe the distinctive *gopuram* or gateway. The beginning of *gopuram* was essayed in the later Pallava temples, in the Kailasanatha temple at Conjeeveram, for instance, but the Pallava *gopuram* was modest in size and unpretentious in style. Under the Pandyas, however, the *gopuram* came to be the most imposing part of the temple. Attention was paid more to the temple portal than to the tower above the *sanctum sanctorum.* The Pandya kings fortified their temples by enclosing them with square concentric walls and monumental gateways which in consequence dwarfed the shrines. A typical *gopuram* is a tall pyramidal structure with either slightly curved or straight slopings, and is surmounted by a barrel-vaulted roof with gable ends, reminiscent of the Buddhist *chaityagriha.* The pyramidal structure stands on a solid cubical base. By far the best example of the Pandya *gopuram* is the eastern gateway of the great temple at Chidambaram in South Arcot district. It measures 90 feet x 60 feet x 135 feet high, and rises in tiers of seven diminishing storeys. The *gopuram* of the later Dravidian temples follows the structure and pattern of the Pandyan style. Of the post-Pandyan examples of *gopurams,* the most noteworthy are those of the Meenakshi temple, Madurai, Ranganatha temple, Srirangam, and the Ramesvaram temple, Ramesvaram.

The Hindu dynasties, such as the Hoysalas and the Pandyas,

did not last long, and during the reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji (A.D. 1296-1315) the Dravidians were finally brought under the sway of the Delhi Sultans under the military leadership of Malik Kafur. But in A.D. 1336 an independent Hindu kingdom was founded with its capital in the city of Vijayanagara (the modern Hampi), on the Tungabhadra river which ruled in the region south of the Krishna. Many foreign visitors have left glowing accounts of the splendour of Vijayanagara, and of these Sewell's *A Forgotten Empire* is our principal source of information about the striking features of this kingdom particularly during the reign of the great king Krishna Deva Raya (A.D. 1509-1529). A fine life size bronze statue of Krishna Deva Raya and his two queens can be seen today in the Tirupati temple. This great Hindu kingdom came to an end in A.D. 1565, when in the battle at Talikota the king Rama Raja was defeated by a military combination of the Deccan Sultans. It is said that it took a whole year to destroy the city with fire and crowbar. During the two hundred and odd years that the Vijaynagara kings ruled, many fine temples were built of which two impressive examples, the Vitthala temple and Hazara Rama temple at Hampi stand out. The Vijaynagara temples show both Pandayan and Hoysala features. The florid character of the Hoysala style received the final baroque touch in the temples of the period.

The flamboyance of Vijaynagara architecture may be studied in the pillars of the temple. Rearing chargers, fantastic monsters and human figures were ingeniously carved into these pillars. In some pillars the central columns were surrounded by slender, miniature pillars having elaborately carved brackets and entablatures. During this period many new additions were also made to the main temple. Of these the most prominent were the *amman* shrine for the consort of the temple deity and the *kalyanamandapam* for the celebration of their marriage anniversary. The *kalyanamandapam* of the Vitthala temple, measuring sixty-two feet either way, with its,

forty-eight pillars, is a beautiful piece of work. The *kalyanamandapam*, which was expanded into halls of thousand pillars, became one of the prominent features of later temple architecture. The hundred-pillared *mandapa* of the Varadaraja temple and the thousand-pillared *mandapa* of the Ekambaranatha temple, both located at Conjeeveram, are fine examples of the Vijayanagara style.

After the defeat of the Vijayanagara king the Nayakas formed a small kingdom with Madurai as its capital, and it is under the Nayakas that temple architecture of the South reached its final phase. The similarity between the Nayaka and the Pandyan styles is close, for the Nayakas worked within the Pandyan idiom. Under the Nayakas the Hindu temple gained in dimensions, but not in beauty. The Nayakas built their temples on vast scales ; the intention was to overpower the mind with awe and fear. Indeed a Nayaka temple, with its holy tank *(teppe kulam)*, halls of thousand pillars, lofty *gopurams*, concentric compound halls, residential quarters, and flower and confectionery stalls outside the temple enclave, looks like a veritable fortified citadel. A few facts will prove the point. The area of the Ranganatha temple is 2,800 feet by 2,475 feet. The largest *gopuram* of the Meenakshi temple is 200 feet from the base (pl. 20). So are the *gopurams* belonging to the temples at Ramesvaram and Srivilliputtur, lofty and imposing pylons, dominating the flat country around. The hall of the Ranganatha temple with its Horse-Court is a stupendous undertaking. The pillared corridors which surround the Ramesvaram temple is 4,000 feet in length. The smallest temple of the period is perhaps the Subrahmaniya temple erected within the enclosure of the Rajrajesvara temple at Tanjore. Authorities accept it as an architectural gem of the Nayaka period built as late as the eighteenth century. About the Nayaka temples it has been aptly remarked that it starts with the largest and finishes with the smallest ; and like the *gopuram*, a typical Nayaka temple progresses by diminishing stages till it reaches the *sanctum sanctorum* lit by the feeble flickers of a lamp.

MOSQUE AND MAUSOLEUM

NEW STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE

DECLINE had already set in in Hindu architecture when the Muhammedan invaders firmly established themselves in the early thirteenth century. The decadence is abundantly portrayed as much in the temples of Mount Abu in the North as in the Vijayanagara and Nayaka architecture in the South. These temples represent the baroque culmination of a style which began in the Gupta period in the fourth century A.D. For nine hundred years the "tree of architecture" had flourished, but now, bent under the weight of rococo temple sculptures and "the halls of thousand pillars", it began to shed its leaves.

Under the Muhammedans architecture blossomed anew. The development of architecture in India under the Muhammedan rulers was possible for two reasons : the skill of Hindu craftsmen and the introduction of a new style which the Muhammedans brought with them. As in other countries, so also in India the Muhammedans made use of local craftsmen, and their art was consequently conditioned by them. The genius of Hindu craftsmen was recognized by the new rulers. As early as A.D. 1018 Mahmud of Ghazni after destroying

the Mathura temples from where he is said to have taken away, among other things, five idols of red gold, each five foot high, wrote to his friend as follows : "There are here a thousand edifices, as firm as the faith of the faithful, nor is it likely that this city has attained its present condition but at the expense of many millions of dinars, nor could such another be constructed under a period of two centuries."

The Saracens from the sandy wastes, nevertheless, brought with them a developed style of architecture which, unlike Hindu or Roman architecture, did not spring from one particular country, but grew out of a common soil of religion in many countries. With local variations in treatment, the new style prevailed in Persia, Syria, Egypt, North Africa, Spain, Sicily, and Turkey before it penetrated into India. Islamic history began with the year of the "Hejira" (A.D. 622) or flight of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina. Soon after the death of Muhammad the Muslim conquerors overran the above countries, borrowed or made adaptations from them, and transformed their adaptations by their artistic sensibility and the requirements of their religious faith. Thus when the Muhammedans came to power in India, the "Saracenic" style had already achieved in nearly four hundred years a sufficient measure of architectural triumph in the form of graceful mosques, noble mausoleums, and luxurious palaces at Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and Cordova.

The predominant features of this new style which the Muslims brought with them into India are arches, vaults, domes, and minarets, besides arabesque design, calligraphic motif, and rich inlaying in *opus sectile* and *pietra dura*. The representation of natural objects, the widest belief to the contrary, was not prohibited by the injunction of the *Quran*, but inhibited by *Hadith* tradition. The Muhammedans, particularly the Shiates, satisfied their craving for linear drawing by devising a method of geometric pattern known as arabesque. Endless variety was possible in arabesque. By permuta-

tion and combination of flowing, spiralling, and interlacing linear movement delicate surface patterns were obtained, and were used freely on wall, niche, and door. Another motif of ornamentation was calligraphy, and the upright Arabic script lent itself readily to decorative use. To enhance the sanctity of the building as well as to produce decorative effect verses from the *Quran* in *Kufic* and *Naskh* lettering were embossed on the wall. *Kufic* is an angular script, *Naskh* a cursive script, and was therefore akin to flowing arabesque pattern. Bands of ornamental *Kufic* and *Naskh* lettering can be seen, for instance, in the Quwwatu'l Mosque in Delhi. Another typical decorative motif in Islamic architecture was stalactite (icicle-like) used primarily to form pendentives of dome. But later on it was freely used for decorating doors, capitals, and walls. The use of vivid colour to enliven ornamentation is traditionally associated with "the gorgeous East." Marble inlay of multicoloured stones, stained glass, and enamelled tiles were the chief means of splashing colour about. But neither colour nor ornamentation was allowed to drown the architectural effect as in Hindu temples. They were subordinated to the rhythmic movements of arches and domes. Arches, symbolic of Islamic faith, were used to span openings, and were constructed by means of wedge-shaped stone, called voussoir, instead of corbelled horizontal courses. Among various forms of arches in use were pointed, ogee (keel), horseshoe, and multifoil (cusped or scalloped). The window openings were effected with stucco or stone-lattices *(claire-voies)* which formed exquisite patterns. Finally, minarets and domes came into use for making the exterior imposing. Minarets were put up for the muezzins *(mu'adhdhin)* to summon the faithful to prayer *(adhan)*. They were either cylindrical or polygonal, and formed an effective framework to define the building. The domical treatment of the mosque and tomb distinguishes the religious buildings of the Saracens. Domes, pointed, oval, and bulbous (pear-shaped), were in use; spherical dome, as in Byzantine architecture, was scarce. To secure

harmony between the square plan and the circular base of the dome the Muhammedans adopted the squinch system of construction. The Byzantine solution of introducing the pendentive method did not find favour with them. The Muhammedan style of architecture undoubtedly found its noblest expression in the building of mosques and mausoleums ; but it was as freely used in secular architecture, and in the layout of formal gardens.

The word "mosque" is derived from the Arabic word *masjid*, and signifies a place for prostration. Besides private chapels and *idgahs* (quadrangles for mass prayers on the occasion of *Id* festivals) there is the Central Mosque or *Jami Masjid* in which the Friday (the Muhammedan Sabbath) prayer of especial sanctity is held. The Muhammedan hardly needs an elaborate paraphernalia for his prayer; all he requires are a fountain for ablution and an enclosed place where with a face turned towards Mecca he may kneel in prayer. The first mosque built by Muhammad in A. D. 622 at Medina met these requirements quite well, but the Prophet's mosque was a simple structure, a square enclosure surrounded by walls of brick and had hardly any architectural distinction. Soon additions were made and within one hundred years of the building of Muhammad's mosque the form evolved into an imposing religious edifice. A typical mosque, quite unlike a Hindu temple, requires open space. The open courtyard or *sahn* was surrounded by pillared cloisters, known as *liwanat* (plural of *liwan*), for protection from the sun. In the centre of the courtyard was the tank for ablution. The cloister which faced towards Mecca was made deep enough to be transformed into a prayer chamber, usually a pillared hall. In the centre of the back wall of the prayer chamber there was the *mihrab* or prayer niche, indicating the *qiblah* or direction for prayer. The pulpit or *mimbar* stood on the right side of the *mihrab* from where the *Imam* or director of prayer intoned the prayers. A *maqsura* or arched facade was added in front of the prayer chamber in order to protect the *Imam* from the crowd. In

this way the prayer chamber was cut off from the open court. Finally, a minaret was added which was used by the muezzin for calling the worshipper to prayer.

Another typical architectural form evolved by the Muhammadens was the mausoleum. Two types of mausoleum came into use : *qabristan* or *dargah* (shrine) and *rauza*. A *qabristan* consisted of a domical chamber called the *huzrah* or *estanah* in the centre of which stood the cenotaph or *zarih*. In addition to the cenotaph, the chamber contained a *mihrab* pointing towards Mecca. The mortuary chamber, known as the *takhana* or *maqbarah*, was placed plumb underneath the domical chamber. In the middle of the mortuary chamber was the grave or *qabr*. The second type of mausoleum, called *rauza*, contained all these features, and it differed from *qabristan* in that it claimed a mosque and an enclosure besides.

Muhammedans came to India with a well-developed architectural tradition ; but in India they had to depend mainly on Hindu craftsmen, and naturally many Hindu features came to be grafted into the Muhammedan style. Hence many writers describe the Muhammedan architecture in India as Indo-Islamic. The blend of two styles depended on many factors, chief of them being the personal temperament and predilection of the Muhammedan rulers. Akbar, for instance, introduced many a Hindu feature in his buildings, whereas his grandson, Shah Jahan, was more rigidly inclined towards Safavid-Persian architecture. The most significant change that took place in Muhammedan buildings in India is that instead of being built in bricks, plaster, and rubble, as in other Muhammedan countries, they were usually conceived in dressed stones like the Hindu temples. Exception should, however, be made of architecture in Kashmir and Bengal. In Bengal, the Muhammedan rulers adopted the prevalent use of small fire-bricks, while in Kashmir they remained contented with the local tradition of wooden construction. In Delhi, in the

fourteenth century the Imperial builder Firuz Shah Tughluq, probably as a result of an attenuated exchequer, made copious use of rubble and plaster. Wherever the Muhammedans built, in the North or in the South, the new style that they brought was influenced and modified by the old style.

THE DELHI SULTANATE

Muhammedan architecture in India necessarily began under the patronage of the securely established Delhi Sultans (A.D. 1206-1526). The style of architecture which flourished during this period has been designated as the "Pathan style" by Fergusson, but the term has been discarded for the simple reason that the Delhi Sultans, were not all Pathans, but of Turkish or Arab breed. The Delhi Sultans were zealous builders, and to them we owe our first introduction to mosque and mausoleum. The first Muhammedan Sultan of Delhi was Qutb-ud-din Aibak, a slave from Turkistan and the general under Muhammad of Ghur. Since the latter had no male heirs, Qutb-ud-din ascended the throne in A.D. 1206, fourteen years after his capture of Delhi. So n after assuming the title of Sultan he put in hand the building of two mosques ; one at Delhi and the other at Ajmer. The Ajmer mosque, known as the Arhai-din-ka-jhompra, was built in the same manner as that at Delhi. The Delhi mosque, called the Quwwatu'l Islam (Might of Islam), is situated near the Qutb Minar. The mosque was built out of the spoils of Hindu temples. Fanatic bigots as the early Sultans were, they subjected the Hindus to the *jizya* or poll-tax, and considered it an act of special grace to free a city of its idols and temples whenever one fell into their hands. Aibak ran true to type. An Arabic inscription on the east wall of the mosque claims that materials of twenty-seven temples were used to cover the rectangular area of 212 feet long and 150 feet wide.

But when its courtyard with its surrounding pillared cloisters was completed, Qutb-ud-din's dream of erecting the Might of Islam was broken. Its walls, capitals, and ceilings bore the appearance of a typical Hindu temple. Hence to give it a truer Islamic look an arched screen was added in front of the prayer chamber on the west. With its five openings, the huge arcaded sereen of the Quwwatu'l Mosque, now in ruins, is 50 feet in hieght, 108 feet in width, and 8½ feet in depth. The central ogee shaped archway measures 45 feet by 22 feet, while two lesser ones on either side are 25 feet in height respectively. In spite of the fact that the archways adopted corbelling instead of radiating voussoirs, as was the practice in Muhammedan countries, at least the central archway with its fine foliate carvings and its ogee curve although not a true arch, yet remains a good piece of work.

With the name of Qutb-ud-din Aibak is associated another beautiful structure, not a mosque or mausoleum, but a detached tower—the great Qutb Minar which stands near the Quwwatu'l Mosque. Qutb-ud-din Aibak probably laid its foundation, and after his death his son-in-law and successor, Iltutmish, had it completed. According to the inscription carved on its surface, this grand tower was raised to cast "the shadow of God over the East and over the West." To erect pillars of victory was a part of Islamic tradition, though raising *vijayastambha* (tower of victory) was not uncommon among Hindus, However, it is more probable that Qutb-ud-din derived his inspiration from the Islamic tradition. Percy Brown's citation of a similar tower at Seville in Spain built by another Muslim ruler about the same time as the building of Qutb Minar confirms our point. Among other examples mention should be made of the towers at Samarra in Mesopotamia, at the mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, and at Damghan and Bostam in Persia. The minaret at Bostam, which dates from the twelfth century A.D., is particularly instructive, because it contains stalactite cornices under the tiers of galleries, a feature found in the Qutb Minar.

The tower of Qutb-ud-din is so overpoweringly Islamic that it is difficult to accept Havell's judgment that it *is* "a Saracenic modification of the Indian type."[1] In plan the Qutb Minar is circular. With its base 46 feet in diameter, it tapers gradually and beautifully to 10 feet at the summit, rising to a height of 238 feet. Its four storeys are punctuated by projecting balconies (pl. 21) ; the first at 97 feet, the second at 148 feet, the third at 188 feet, and the fourth at 214 feet from the ground. The stalactite bracketing has been used for the support of four boldly projecting balconies, but its execution betrays Hindu craftsmanship as is evident from arches and brackets.

All things considered, the Qutb Minar, as Fergusson points out, "is the most beautiful example of its class known to exist anywhere. The rival that will occur at once to most people is the campanile at Florence, built by Giotto. That is, it is is true, 30 ft. taller, but it is crushed by the mass of the cathedral alongside ; and, beautiful though it is, it wants that poetry of design and exquisite finish of detail which marks every moulding of the minar."[2]

The earliest mausoleum in India was built by Iltutmish for his son in A.D. 1231 in Delhi, but the first significant mausoleum is his own tomb which lies behind the north-west corner of Quwwtu'l Mosque built before A D. 1236. It is a square structure with openings on three sides. The fourth side on the west contains three *mihrabs*. The interior is ingeniously ornamented with inscriptions from the *Quran* in *Naskh* and *Kufic* characters, in addition to geometric diaper pattern. The mausoleum of Iltutmish carried a dome of concentric rings, and to adjust the circular dome to the rectangular structure below, to make the transition harmonious, squinch arches were employed. Though carried out unscientifically by means of overlapping courses, it is perhaps the first important example of the use of squinch arches in India.

Iltutmish died in A.D. 1236, and with him the architecture of the so-called Slave dynasty. The Slave kings were followed in quick

turn by the Khaljis (A.D. 1290-1320), the Tughluqs (A.D. 1320-1413), the Sayyids (A.D. 1414-1451), and the Lodis (A.D. 1451-1526). Between Iltutmish's death and the accession of Ala-ud-din Khalji to the throne in A.D. 1296, the Sultanate was too effete to undertake any significant architectural project except the tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban (A.D. 1266-87), distinguished for its true arch. Ala-ud-din Khalji had many ambitious projects. He wanted to raise a tower twice the size of the Qutb Minar, and to extend the Quwwatu'l Mosque on an immense scale. Accordingly, he began the work of extension in A.D. 1310, but his premature death five years later left his megalomaniac project unfinished. Of his work only the Alai Darwaza, intended to be the south gateway to the Quwwatu'l Mosque, remains intact. The city wall of Siri, the capital founded by Ala-ud-din, has, however, no architectural importance.

The Alai Darwaza or Gateway of Ala-ud-din speaks eloquently of Ala-ud-din's love for architecture. As is to be expected, the Gateway is an isolated structure, but that has not marred its beauty. By itself the Alai Darwaza is an elegant structure, a fine example of fusion of two utterly contrasted styles of architecture. It is a square structure with a low dome above it. The harmony between the dome above and the square below, the transition from angular to spherical volumes, has been obtained by means of the squinch arch as in the tomb of Iltutmish, but in point of construction and artistic excellence it is vastly superior to the latter. The beauty of the Alai Darwaza lies in its facade which clearly divides itself into two parts, namely, the central door and the walls on two sides. The walls, again, above their plinths are divided into storeys. The lower ones contain fine trellis windows and arched recesses, decorated with ornamental motifs, which were, according to Goetz, "innovations from the Hindu art of Gujarat."[3] The Gateway is justly famous for its arch, built by means of radiating voussoirs. Apart from its rational

construction, the arch is beautiful to look at. Enclosed within a rectangular frame, it stands beautifully on small carved columns. The double-curved pointed arch, with its outer curve, extrados, decorated with calligraphy, and the inner curve, intrados, fringed with lotus buds, is an artistic *tour de force*.

In contrast to the Alai Darwaza the mausoleum of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughluq I (d. Feb. A.D.1325) at Tughluqabad in Delhi shows a "dour disregard" of architectural ornamentation and elaboration. This building sets the standard of subsequent monuments characterized by their bleak solidity. The tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din is a massively built structure. Severely simple in style, it must have looked like a barbican in the midst of an artificial lake, now dry, connected by a causeway with the mighty fortress opposite. Indeed, the tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din presents an ambivalent character—a fortress for the body's defence, and a sepulchure for the soul's rest. It is to be presumed that the political unrest of the period gave this building its double-character. Surrounded by an enclosure of lofty stone walls with bastions at angles, the tomb stands in the courtyard diagonally so that its wall on the west could face Meccawards. The structure is a cube of sandstone, punctuated occasionally by white marble. The significant feature of this mausoleum is the conspicuous slope of its outer walls, a feature which continues during the regime of the most enlightened Tughluq, Firuz Shah. The finial of the dome, the stone *amalaka* and the *kalasa*, is reminiscent of the terminals of a Hindu temple, but the arch of the doorway is Islamic and harks back to the Alai Darwaza. The addition of lintel across the base of the arch, on the other hand, suggests the hand of a Hindu architect.

Firuz Shah Tughluq, the third king of the Tughluq dynasty, was an inveterate builder. "Among the many gifts which God bestowed upon me, His humble servant", he is reported to have said, "was a desire to erect public buildings. So I built many mosques and colleges and monasteries...." His palace-fort, with its huge

Jami Masjid, known as the Kotla Firuz Shah, in Delhi is now battered and broken; its materials carted away to build later cities. But it is well worth a visit, if not for any other reason, at least for the Asokan pillar which was removed from the original site (Topara), near Ambala, by Firuz and planted on an eminence within the fortress. The rugged simplicity of the period may be seen in numerous mosques and mausoleums, chief of which are the Kali or Sanjar Masjid, Begumpuri Mosque, the Khirki and Kalan mosques, all within Delhi. Mention should also be made of the mausoleums of Firuz at Hauz-i-Khas and of Khan-i-Jahan Telingani. The latter, situated near the Kali Masjid at Nizamuddin, Delhi, is a daring departure from the square mausoleum, and its octagonal shape was introduced to make the exterior more impressive. Anyhow, the octagonal tomb of Telingani served, while the fashion lasted, as a model for the subsequent mausoleums in India.

During the rule of the Sayyids and the Lodis architecture remained, as in the Tughluq period, bare and austere. Apart from the introduction of enamelled tile decoration, the period of the Sayyids and the Lodis is also noted for its application of double dome. Its first use is to be found in the tomb of Shihab-ud-din Taj Khan (A.D. 1501), but it was merely an attempt. In the tomb of Sikandar Lodi (c. A.D. 1518), however, the double dome becomes a *fait accompli.* Obviously the Indian architects took the cue from the monuments of Persia and Iraq. "The reason for this structural procedure becoming necessary", according to Percy Brown, "was due to the increasing inclination to raise the height of the dome in order to present a loftier and more imposing exterior. This operation naturally raised the height of its inner surface, or ceiling in the interior of the building, thus causing the latter to be disproportionately tall for the size of the chamber it covered. By building two domes in the form of an inner and outer shell separated by a void, the proportions of both the exterior, and particularly the interior were much improved. Later, most of the larger domes in India were

constructed on the same principle, so that the first appearance of such a device in this particular building is important."[4]

The Lodi style is best displayed in Moth-ki-Masjid in Delhi, built by Miyan Bhoiya, the Prime Minister of Sikandar Lodi. The elegant arches of the facade together with the proportionate disposition of three domes, the tapering turrets on the rear wall, and a combination of white marble, coloured tiles, and red sandstone make it an attractive mosque, thus paveing the way to the grandeur of early Mughul architecture.

PROVINCIAL SULTANATES

The Delhi Sultans reigned for nearly three centuries and a quarter, but in the absence of internal security their sway seldom extended beyond Delhi and its environs. The satraps of the Delhi Sultan in the outlying provinces declared themselves free, and India in the "mediaeval period" was dotted with independent kingdoms, big and small, except when they were brought under the unifying rule of the great Mughuls in the sixteenth century. The provincial rulers were bigots, like the Delhi Sultans, and to plant the banner of the Crescent they, too, demolished many a Hindu temple. But they were mostly enlightened bigots, men of culture and refined taste. Literature, art, and architecture flourished under their rule. In architecture, a more effective fusion of Hindu and Muhammedan elements was achieved in these provinces than in Delhi, because they were farther away from Mecca, Damascus, and Baghdad than Delhi. Each of these provinces consequently reflects the regional temper as modified by the Islamic concept of architecture.

In Bengal, there grew up a distinctive style based on the acceptance of the curvilinear roof (commonly called Bengali roof), dwarf square pillars, and bricks as building materials. But in giving

·chitecture a new orientation the Muslim did not graft the indigenous yle effectively. The use of sloping curvilinear roof, for instance, in brick building curbs its magnitude and diminishes its beauty. The /o impressive performances of Bengal architects are the Adina ¨osque and the Dakhil Darwaza. The latter, dating from about A.D. :65, is a victory arch standing near the citadel of Gaur, the capital of ɜngal. The Adina Mosque at Pandua, built in about A.D. 1368 by :kandar Shah, equals in size the eighth century Great Mosque at amascus. It was so large that on Fridays several thousands could ɜar the Imam intoning prayers. The central nave of the sanctuary, feet by 34 feet, with its pointed archway 50 feet high and 33 feet ide, and trefoil arched *mihrab* at the western side, bearing Hindu ɜsigns, all point to a work of rich imagination. Mention should also · made of the Chhota Sona Masjid (Lesser Golden Mosque) built ' Wali Muhammad in about A.D. 1510, the Bara Sona Masjid `reater Golden Mosque) completed by Nusrat Shah in A.D. 1526, ıd the Qadam Rasul (A.D. 1530). All these were built at Gaur.

Jaunpur, thirty-four miles north-west of Banaras on the Gumti ·er, was the capital of the Sharqi rulers (the Sharqi or Eastern 'nasty). It was a handsome city and was known as the "Shiraz of ɜ East". Jaunpur was mercilessly destroyed by Buhlul Lodi, d most of the beautiful buildings which had once adorned is city disappeared. The Jaunpur style is distinguished by its e of pylon or gateways "of almost Egyptian mass and outline" 'ergusson). In the use of arches the Jaunpur architects showed ıcertainty, conversant as they were with the construction of beam d bracket for spanning space. Minarets are completely absent at .unpur.

Atala Masjid, the finest sample of Jaunpur style, named after the indu temple of Atala Devi, resembles the mosque of the Tughluqs its massive sturdiness, but is more mellow and more ornate. ıe distinguishing feature of the Atala Masjid is the pylon in the

centre of the sanctuary, 75 feet high with its arched recess 11 feet deep. The Jami Masjid, better conceived than the Lal Darwaza (Red Door Mosque), bears a resemblance to Atala Masjid ; and its imposing pylon, eighty feet high on the eastern side, is divided by string courses into five storeys.

A remarkable development emanated in Gujarat. The province of Gujarat became an independent kingdom in A.D. 1401; but between A.D. 1297 when it was conquered by Ala-ud-din Khalji and A.D. 1411 when its capital, Ahmadabad, was founded by Ahmad Shah, grandson of Muzaffar Shah and the first real independent ruler, many beautiful mosques and tombs were built, chief of them being Adina Mosque. Muslim rulers were fortunate in Gujarat, as they could employ the skilled services of the Hindu masons whose ancestors had constructed the Jain temples on Mount Abu and elsewhere. Hindu craftsmen of Gujarat excelled in the stone-cutter's art, and many a building in Gujarat is justly famous for its delicate work of tracery. Built of local yellow sandstone, the buildings of Gujarat are noted for their tall, slender, turreted minarets.

Ahmadabad is famous for its Tin Darwaza and Jami Masjid. The Tin Darwaza or Triple Gateway was meant to be a triumphal arch. It led into the outer court of the Bhadar, known as the Royal Square,--now penned between ugly shops—, and is distinguished for its finely balanced and delicate framing of archways. It is 80 feet wide and 45 feet deep, but only 37 feet in height. Jami Masjid is a short distance east of the Tin Darwaza, and is approached by a flight of steps from the north. The sanctuary on the west is a hypostyle hall consisting of about three hundred closely set pillars. Intercolumniation suggests careful execution. The facade of the sanctuary, with its three broad openings, stands in contrast to the pleasing crowding of the interior. The style of architecture in Gujarat reached its highest point of development during the reign of Mahmud Begarha I (A.D. 1458-1511), who "added glory and lustre to the kingdom of Gujarat". The

perforated stone screen wrought with delicate ornamental motifs in the mosque of Sidi Sayyid at Ahmadabad displays the Gujarat stone-carver's art at its best.

Malwa, with its capital first at Dhar and then at Mandu, with no Hindu craftsmen at their beck and call, had to draft masons from Delhi as is evident from the stamp of Delhi style in the architecture of the two cities. The finest mosque in Malwa is the Jami Masjid at Mandu begun by Hushang Shah and completed by Mahmud Khalji in c. A.D. 1440. Built on a high plinth, the mosque is approached by a flight of steps leading to the imposing domed entrance hall. Each side of the courtyard is surrounded by eleven great arches of equal size and height. The prayer hall is noteworthy for its "repeating arcades of arches." Much of the beauty of the mosque is due to the panels in glazed tiles and coloured borders. At Mandu architecture found freer expression more in the building of palaces than in mosques and mausoleums. The palace, called Jahaj Mahal (Ship Palace), situated between two tanks, is full of feminine grace ; "its surfaces are gay with friezes of brightly coloured glaze." The solidity and massiveness of the Hindola Mahal, close by, is here missing. In its stead open pavilions, delicate kiosks, balconied turrets, sumptuous baths made the pleasure palace both fanciful and elegant.

In the Deccan, an independent kingdom was set up by Hasan, under the title of Abul-Muzaffar Ala-ud-din Bahman Shah, in A.D. 1347 with its capital at Gulbarga. In A.D. 1422 the capital was shifted to Bidar. Hasan's dynasty was known as the Bahmani dynasty. The Bahmani kingdom was split into five states in A.D. 1489 : Bidar, Golkonda, Berar, Ahmadnagar, and Bijapur, each named after its capital. The Bahmani Sultans of the Deccan were constantly engaged in feuds with the neighbouring Hindu kings of Vijayanagara, Telingana, and Orissa. Hence the architecture of the Deccan in its early phase was exposed to Persian influence, but when the

Vijayanagara king was defeated at the battle of Talikota many Hindu features, such as round pillars, lintels, brackets, and eaves, cropped up in the Deccanese architecture.

The early Deccan style is best displayed by the Jami Masjid at Gulbarga (A.D. 1367), said to have been designed by Rafi, a Persian architect. According to another tradition, it was built by a Moorish architect from Cordova. The mosque is unique in that it is entirely covered, light being admitted through grilled side walls. During the regime of Adil Shahi governors a great many mosques and mausoleums came to be built in Bijapur. Among these the most notable building is the Gol Gumbaj, the *rauza* of Muhammad Adil Shah (pl. 22). Its dome, 124 feet in diameter, is the second largest in the world, the largest being St. Peter's at Rome, 139 feet across. The Gol Gumbaj marks the beginning of the use of intersecting arches to support the dome. The bold foliations at the base is another conspicuous feature of the dome. In point of richness of ornament, however, the palm must be given to the Ibrahim Rauza (A.D. 1615), the tomb of Adil Shah I. Elaborate bracketing, perforated windows, carefully designed wall-surface filled with arabesques and traceried inscriptions, tall turrets, and the bulbous dome make this the fitting mausoleum of one who loved art. Noteworthy among other monuments in the Deccan are the gateway of the Mihtar Mahal, (erected in A.D. 1591) Gagan Mahal, and the Sat Manjil at Bijapur, the *madrasa* (theological seminary) at Bidar, and the Char Minar at Hyderabad.

THE GREAT MUGHULS

The third or the final phase of architecture under the Muhammedans began with the conquest of Northern India by Zahir-ud-din Muhammad, surnamed Babur, a Barlus Turk, who defeated

Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi, at the battle of Panipat on April 26, A.D. 1526. Architecture under the Mughul rule lasted for over two centuries from A.D. 1526 to 1761. The chief monuments of the Mughul period were erected during the reign of Akbar (A.D. 1556-1605) and Shah Jahan (A.D. 1628-1658). The cities enriched were Delhi, Agra, and Lahore. Architecture of the Mughul period is usually divided into two phases : the red sandstone phase and the white marble phase.

The red sandstone phase was preceded by a formative period. To this period belong the works of Babur, his son Humayun, and the buildings of Sher Shah Sur. Babur was a man of refined sensibility, but his sensibility did not blossom in India. He disliked India. There were in India, he used to complain, "no good horses, no good flesh-meat, no grapes or melons, no ice or cold water, no good food or bread, no baths or colleges." Nor did he like Hindu architecture, its irregular planning and haphazard complex of buildings. According to Vincent Smith, Babur is reported to have requisitioned the services of certain pupils of the famous Ottoman architect, Sinan, since his ambition was to make Agra, his capital, look like Samarqand with marble baths and pavilions. Of Babur's work now only three samples remain : the mosque in the Kabuli Bagh at Panipat, the Jami Masjid at Sambhal, and a mosque within the old Lodi fort at Agra. These structures lack distinctive architectural character. Hence it is reasonable to argue that either Babur failed to get the expert advice of the pupils of the famous Ottoman architect or their instructions were not carried out by Hindu craftsmen who built for Babur at Agra, Sikri, Biyana, Dholpur, Gwalior, and Kiul. That Babur could not depend on Hindu craftsmen, is clear from his inimitable *Memoirs*. For instance, of the mosque within the Lodi fort at Agra he says in his *Memoirs*, "it is not well done, it is in the Hindustani fashion." Babur thought in terms of Byzantine or Persian style. For such a

man a happy fusion of Muslim and Hindu art traditions could hardly mean anything.

Babur died in A.D. 1530, and his heir, Humayun, ruled from A.D. 1530 to 1540, and again for a brief spell from A.D. 1555 to 1556. During the interregnum the country was ruled by Sher Shah Sur, the Afghan rival of Humayun. Architecture under Sher Shah bears close similarity to the early Mughul style. In fact, the early Mughul style is the logical culmination of Sur style. Sher Shah's architecture may be studied from two examples which are *in situ.* The beautiful buildings which once stood within the grim grey walls of the Purana Qila (Old Fort) were razed to the ground probably by Humayun in order to revenge himself upon Sher Shah, who had made him lose his throne, and forced him to lead a nomadic existence for fifteen long years in Persia. The mosque in the Old Fort, called the Qila-i-Kuhna Masjid, indicates clearly its transitional character. In design it is affiliated to the Jamali Masjid (A.D. 1536) in Delhi, built in the Lodi style. Like the latter, the Qila-i-kuhna Masjid has a facade consisting of five arch openings and a prominent archway in the centre. But in execution the Jamali Masjid is crude, whereas Sher Shah's mosque is decidedly elegant. Hence it looks forward to the more refined and ornate type of mosque to be built by his Mughul successors. Retaining the same design as that of the Jamali Masjid, Sher Shah's architect tempered his pious zeal with a natty deftness which enhanced the beauty of his handiwork. The exterior has been improved by oriel windows, the interior by its proportion of five bays ; while the whole by a clever blending of particoloured ornamentation. Sher Shah was buried beneath a beautiful mausoleum at Sasaram in Bihar. This tomb is also an improvement on the previous octagonal tombs. Situated in the middle of a large lake, the mausoleum stands on a high podium, at the corners of which are domed kiosks. The great dome is seventy-one feet in diameter, and beneath it are two tiers

of smaller kiosks without which the composition would have been dull indeed.

Of architecture during Humayun's reign we have little evidence, but his own tomb in Delhi is one of the noblest mausoleums erected during Akbar's reign (pl. 23). Of this tomb Fergusson states as follows : "Its most marked characteristic, however, is its purity—it might be called poverty—of design. It is so very unlike anything that Akbar ever built, that it is hardly possible it could have been designed by him."[6] And it was not ; the tomb was built under the instruction of Humayun's wife, Hajji Begum (Sharfu'n-Nisa), eight years after her husband's demise when Akbar himself was occupied in erecting the fortress-palace at Agra.

Humayun's tomb is Persian in character ; the blend between the two styles, Hindu and Saracenic, is less apparent than in most of Akbar's buildings. The mausoleum is situated within a large formal garden whose layout is still intact. The central building stands on a red sandstone podium 22 feet high, with arches on its sides, opening into small rooms. The tomb proper is 156 feet square and 125 feet high. The interior consists of several compartments octagonal in shape, each being connected with the other by a diagonal passage. The interior, therefore, is a departure from the previous practice of a single domical cell. The dome is slightly bulbous in contour, and is an importation from Persia, but the kiosks with cupolas on the angle towers are indigenous. It is clear from the proportional relation of the height of the interior to the size of its central chamber that the method of constructing vaulted ceiling in a double dome has reached near perfection in Humayun's tomb. The total effect of the mausoleum is one of chaste sobriety, enhanced by a judicious combination of red sandstone and white marble, and sustained by neat balance and proportion between the component parts.

Akbar built at Allahabad, Ajmer, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, and Lahore ; but his most comprehensive work is to be found at Fatehpur

Sikri, twenty-three miles from Agra. At Agra Akbar erected the famous fortress-palace, later altered by his successors beyond recognition. Apart from the battlements, which show sound engineering skill, and the Jahangiri Mahal, practically nothing remains of Akbar's original construction. Originally the Fort contained, according to *Ain-i-Akbari*, "upwards of five hundred edifices of red stones in fine styles of Bengal and Gujarat". It was part of Akbar's building policy to boost Hindu architects, and the Jahangiri Mahal displays that plainly. The square pillars, bracket capitals, and horizontal arches in the Mahal are patently Hindu in style and owes very little to Persia.

At Fatehpur Sikri, on the other hand, Hindu and Persian styles blend into one. The city, about seven miles in circumference, was built in honour of the Saint Chishti, Shaikh Salim in A.D. 1569. It was surrounded on three sides by a wall pierced by nine gateways ; on the north-west was a large artificial lake, now dry. Within this city there were residential, official, and religious buildings, each of which bears testimony to Akbar's architectural style at its best. Religious edifices at Fatehpur Sikri are the Stone-cutter's Mosque, the tomb of Salim Chishti's son, Nagina Mosque, and the Jami Masjid ; but the last with its two tombs of Salim Chishti and Islam Khan is the cynosure of our eyes.

Jami Masjid is one of the largest mosques in India ; the rectangular area it covers is 542 feet by 438 feet. With its three sides surrounded by pillared cloisters, and the west by the sanctuary, the mosque is conventional. The sanctuary is crowned by three domes, and a series of kiosks along the parapet are silhouetted against the blue sky. The lofty central propylon leads into the nave and aisles on each side. The nave is an exquisitely carved square hall. The pillars of the aisles, which connect the nave with the side-chapels, have been so arranged that they do not constrict the spaciousness of the interior. The Jami Masjid is an architectural triumph, but that

can hardly be said of the miniature mausoleum of Salim Chishti standing within the spacious courtyard of the mosque. The emphasis is here on carving and ornamentation. Built wholly in white marble, the mausoleum is small, its vaulted chamber being only sixteen feet in diameter. A porch supported by pillars projects from the south, while the wide cornice is supported by brackets. The low dome makes the mausoleum look more dwarfish than it is. Indeed, the tiny mausoleum of Salim Chishti is disappointing ; the tomb of Islam Khan by its side shows greater promise. The baroque splendour of the Salim Chishti is due to the Hindu predilection for profuseness of detail and ornamentation. Nowhere is this more marked than in those functionally useless brackets which project from the pillars under the porch in bizarre serpentine coils. Seeing them, one remembers the carvings in the temples on Mount Abu. Riotous fancy, rather than restrained aesthetic sensibility, informed the design of this mausoleum.

The architectural poverty of the Salim Chishti is, however, more than compensated for by the Buland Darwaza (Lofty Gateway), the southern gateway to the Jami Masjid· It was built to mark Akbar's conquest of Gujarat. A beautiful message carved on its stone reads as follows : *"Jesus Son of Mary (on whom be peace) said : The world is a bridge ; pass over it, but build no house upon it. Who hopes for an hour, hopes for an eternity. The world is an hour. Spend it in prayer, for the rest is unseen."* The inscription is an evidence of Akbar's studied eclecticism.

The Buland Darwaza is a magnificent piece of work, and to appreciate its beauty we should view it apart from the mosque of which it is a part (pl. 24). That is because the lofty Buland Darwaza by its very height, 134 feet exclusive of the flight of steps, dwarfs the rest of the mosque. Hence like the Alai Darwaza, it should be looked at as a single portal. As a gateway it satisfactorily solves the problem inherent in the construction of a lofty portal. The

problem is that of proportion between gateway and doorway. A large gateway should require proportionately a large doorway ; but "men are," as Fergusson remarks, "only 6 ft. high, and they do not want portals through which elephants might march."[6] According to the same authority, neither the Greeks nor the Gothic architects could solve the problem adequately. That the Buland Darwaza never admitted the possibility of a passage for elephants was evidenced by placing a few doors within a semidome. In this way the door was accorded its just height, the gateway was made lofty, and the problem of harmony was tackled not by bringing the doorway in relation to the gateway, but by placing it in relation to the semidome with its rectangular framework.

Another structure assigned to Akbar is his own mausoleum at Sikandara. But according to the historians, the plan of the tomb, the selection of the site as well as the construction of the ground storey was probably made by Akbar, while the execution of the rest was effected by his son, Jahangir. That Akbar's mausoleum is unconventional is clear from its design. It is a pyramidal building consisting of four storeys without any dome on its roof. The ground storey stands on a high podium, 30 feet high and 320 feet square, surrounded by a massive cloister and pierced by a lofty archway in the centre. In contrast to the well-built masculine lowest storey, the topmost storey, smaller in size, is feminine. Its effeminate daintiness, judged from the exterior, is due, first, to its being wholly in white marble ; and secondly, to its steeped walls relieved by *claire-voies* ; and thirdly, to its tall slender kiosks on its four sides. Judged from within, one may say that a delicately carved cenotaph engraved with ninety-nine names of Allah heightens its fragile charm. Unconventionality apart, Akbar's mausoleum does not possess any feature distinctive of Akbar's buildings. If anything, there is an absence of integration in this mausoleum due perhaps to its dual authorship. As to its design, Fergusson's opinion that it is modelled

after Buddhist *viharas*, is now widely held. "If the tomb had been crowned by a domical chamber", says he, "over the tombstone, the likeness would have been so great that no one could mistake it, and my convinction is, that such a chamber was part of the original design."[7]

The tomb of I'timad-ud-daulah at Agra, like Akbar's mausoleum at Sikandara, stands within a well-ordered formal garden. The mausoleum was built by Nur Jahan, the beloved wife of Jahangir, in memory of her father. Unlike Akbar's mausoleum, the tomb stands on a low podium of four feet high and is square in plan. From the high standard attained by mausoleums during the reigns of Humayun and Akbar the tomb of I'timad-ud-daulah shows a decline. The lack of integration between the octagonal towers and the square exterior greatly diminishes the effects of its otherwise small facade, while its wide sloping eaves do not harmonize with the rest of the structure, and render the two finials placed over it meaningless. Percy Brown does not agree with this opinion, and feels that it is an elegant structure. However, as regards its importance to the historical development of Mughul style there cannot be two opinions. It is entirely built in white marble, and is a link between two periods : those of Akbar and Shah Jahan. The inlay work of *pietra dura*, which some think might have been imported from Florence, appears here in lush abundance (pl. 25). The decoration in earlier buildings was covered with inlay of *opus sectile*.

Under Shah Jahan the direction of architecture took a new turn. He did not carry forward the tradition of his grandfather ; in fact he bypassed it. Persia cast a spell over his mind, but the style that Shah Jahan created owed more to provinces, such as Gujarat, Malwa, Deccan, and Bengal, than to the Saffavid style. Hence the contrast between the two styles of Mughul architecture, which is clearly marked in the two buildings within the Agra Fort. The Jahangiri Mahal built by Akbar is in red sandstone, while the Khas Mahal by

Shah Jahan is in white marble. If the former is austere, the latter is luxurious. More significant than the difference in tone is the *difference in technique, in regard to the treatment of such individual* features as arch, dome, pillar, and vaulted ceiling. During Shah Jahan's reign multifoil arches with nine cusps became the fashion, though semicircular arches were not rare. The dome became bulbous, high drummed, and narrowed at its neck. The pillars were distinguished by foliated bases, tapering shafts, and voluted capitals. Splendid effect was produced when two such pillars stood together as in the Diwani-i-khas at Agra Fort. Designs in *pietra dura* splashed the rooms with colour, gilt-ceilings were festooned with foliages and flowers, while trellised windows, embossed brass, and silver doors produced the effect of splendour and wealth. Foreign artisans co-operated with Indian craftsmen to work out these sumptuous architectural designs. The representation of Orpheus with his lute on the panel behind the throne platform in Diwan-i-Am (Delhi) is unmistakable evidence of the presence of a European craftsman amongst the builders of the Red Fort.

Like his grandfather, Shah Jahan also was an indefatigable builder. Palace-fort, mosque, and mausoleum at Lahore, Delhi, Ajmer, and Srinagar cropped up one after another. Some of these buildings, for instance, the Red Fort of Delhi, were personally supervised by the Emperor himself. Shah Jahan's building career began in the first year of his reign. His maiden attempt was the Diwan-i-Am within the Agra Fort. Then followed in quick succession, magnificent and lavishly decorated buildings—Diwan-i-Khas, Sish Mahal, Nagina Masjid, all within the Agra Fort. In A.D. 1638 Shah Jahan decided to shift his capital to Delhi (Shahjahanabad). More buildings followed. The grandeur of the Great Mughuls nowhere burns more fiercely than in the marble palaces behind the Diwan-i-Am. The centre of interest is, of course, the Diwan-i-khas or the Hall of Private Audience. Its open pavilion, 90 feet by 67 feet, is

divided into fifteen compartments by arches supported on marble piers, and profusely inlaid with *pietra dura.* It is a setting which provides substance to the description of the gorgeous East, with lavish hand, showering on her Kings Barbaric pearl and gold.

It is a relief indeed to turn from the rich riot of colour of the palaces of the Red Fort to the sombre dignity of Jami Masjid which lies north-west of the Fort (pl. 26). Like all other Central Mosques of the period, the Jami Masjid consists of vaulted cloisters on three sides, a quadrangle, a sanctuary on the west with its *mihrab* indicating the direction towards Mecca, and a *mimbar* on its right side. The mosque is built on a lofty basement, and its three gates on north, south, and east, its minarets rising in four stages, and finally, three white domes punctuated by thin vertical lines of black are related to each other according to the strictest laws of proportion. The elevated site makes the dome and minarets visible from most places within the city, and gives it a lordly air of domination. The facade of the sanctuary is divided into three parts : the central archway and five engrailed arches on each side. The interior contains a hall besides two aisles separated by massive piers.

Jami Masjid is exactly proportionate, strictly harmonious, and congruously cold. With this impression imprinted on his mind, a visitor encounters the Moti Masjid in the Agra Fort. The plan of both the mosques is the same, the Moti Masjid being the smaller of the two. The Pearl Mosque looks like a pearl from within, with its white marble veined in blue, grey, and white. Its cusped arches and groined vaults create a symphony of curves and angles on which our eyes softly dwell. The exterior is no less elegant when, for instance, we view its three bulbous domes with their slender finials from the Diwan-i-Khas.

Admittedly, the Taj is Shah Jahan's masterpiece. Its history: when it was built, whether it was designed by the Venetian jeweller Geronimo Veroneo, who died at Lahore in A.D. 1640, or by Shah

Jahan himself, how it was built, for whom it was built, its enormous cost in terms of modern currency, all this has passed into legend. Its beauty, too, has been acclaimed for centuries. Poets have rhapsodized about it, lovers have shed tears over it, and clever people have tried to debunk it. Endless 'ohs' and 'ahs' have gushed forth from men and women who 'do' India annually between October and February. Some specimens of comments will justify this assertion. The "plastic beauty", "pleasing contours", and "chaste appearance" of the Taj, it has been held, are "the immortal emblem of all mortal love." Its dome is "cloud reclin'd upon his airy throne", its central chamber has "chastened beauty which no words can express", while its exterior is "complete lucidity and coherence". In fine, this "unique memorial" is a "materialized vision of rare and silent beauty". All beautiful things tease us out of thought—they either send us to dizzy raptures or to silent contemplation. Hence these false flowers of rhetoric. When, therefore, the first shock of surprise has subsided, we begin to realize that this "snowlike contours of inspired marble" is the artistic culmination of the mausoleum of Humayun, and is thoroughly Persian in character, but, as Goetz has reminded us, Indian in its spirit (pl. 27).

The mausoleum stands on a 22 feet high podium, and is square in plan with chamfered angles. The arrangement of the interior is the same as that of Humayun's tomb—octagonal central chamber with side-chambers at the eight angles. At each corner of the terrace stand cylindrical minarets picked out by black lines and crowned by kiosks, the height of each being 137 feet. The central lotus dome, contracted at the end, rises beautifully from a circular drum and terminates in an inverted lotus. The tomb is decorated by a perforated screen and fine inlay work. The central chamber is lighted by soft subdued light which comes through white marble trellis-work, but, alas, it is now fitted with glass, and light has

become inadequate. In appreciating the beauty of the Taj we must not fail to take note of the subtle variations of colour in the texture of the marble itself which came from Makrana and Raiwala quarries in Jaipur, the lovely echoes of the dome, and the setting of black cypress laid out in the strictly formal garden leading to the mausoleum.

Shah Jahan's lavishness hastened the decline of Mughul architecture. Bernier in his *Letters to Colbert* (*1656-68*) wrote : "The country is ruined by the necessity of defraying the enormous charges required to maintain the splendour of a numerous court, and to pay a large army maintained for the purpose of keeping the people in subjection..." Shah Jahan's successor, Aurangzeb (A.D. 1658-1707), understood the situation too well, and refrained from undertaking the construction of buildings at public cost. That he brought the touch of death to everything he undertook, is only a partial assessment of his personality. Nor did his fierce theology preclude his posing for a portrait. But he was too impecunious to play Lord Bountiful to artists and architects. Good architects sought rich pastures elsewhere, possibly in Persia. Architecture waned ; the few buildings that Aurangzeb raised show that plainly. The Moti Masjid (A.D. 1662) in the Delhi Fort has a fine interior, but far from a pleasing exterior. The three cupolas are too rounded to carry aesthetic conviction. The Badshahi Mosque (A.D. 1674) at Lahore, built in imitation of the Jami Masjid of Delhi, is inferior to the original. And the mausoleum of Rabi'a Daurani, the Emperior's wife, in Aurangabad is at most a tawdry imitation of the Taj.

SCULPTURE

MOHENJO-DARO AND HARAPPA

ONE cannot say of Indian sculpture as of Indian architecture that it began in the Maurya period. The tradition of Indian sculpture is as old as the Indus valley civilization. Excavations of Harappa in the Punjab and Mohenjo-daro in Sind have revealed the existence of urban cultures as far back as 2500 B.C. The well-planned cities, the brick-buildings of varying sizes, level roads, and fine corbel-vaulted drains indicate that the Harappa and Mohenja-daro people were wealthly, and enjoyed a fair measure of civic amenities. The most striking feature of the Indus valley culture is, in the words of Stuart Piggott, a scrupulous adherence to "the unchanging traditions of the temple" rather than "the secular instability of the court."[1]

Architecture of the Indus valley leaves us cold, and as Percy Brown says, the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are as "barren as would be the remains of some present-day working town in Lancashire."[2] The best that can be said of these buildings is that they serve their purpose, but such a view would be too niggardly for the sculpture. It is in sculpture that the artistic genius of the Indus

valley revels. The few sculptures and a lage number of steatite seals which have been discovered so far are expressions of an art at once alive and mature. Indeed, the high degree of skill revealed in them indicates a link with tradition, a "picked experience." Excavations have confirmed that belief. As far back as the fourth millennium B.C. many peasant cultures grew up in the area between Baluchistan and Sind. Those which flourished about the first half of the third millennium B.C. in Baluchistan, known as the Zhob and Kulli cultures, have yielded a large number of terra-cotta figurines of animals and women. They are the earliest extant specimens of plastic art of India. Crude as these figurines are, they reveal a fresh and naive approach which is characteristic of all primitive art. The plastic tradition of Zhob and Kulli cultures did not die, when the commercial and urban cultures of the Indus valley arose. It should be possible to prove that the plastic sensibility evident in the Zhob and Kulli figurines was continued in the plastic art of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.

Nevertheless, mere continuance is no evidence of vitality. A tradition must develop and change ; the sculptures and the seals of the Indus valley show that plainly. Among the few sculptures of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro that we can see today the most noteworthy is the broken male torso in red sandstone. Though represented frontally, this Harappa torso is conceived in three dimensions. Realism of a very high order makes this piece a work of beauty, but this realism makes no attempt at a representational literalness of human anatomy. On the contrary, the aesthetic design has envisaged a certain pattern of curved masses suggestive of "the essential image." The subtle curves of the back, the rather heavy abdomen, and the peculiar indentations on the shoulder are all conceived in one sweeping nervous and sensitive line, rhythmical in a surprisingly sophisticated manner.

Another much-discussed statuette of the period is the image

of a dancing girl from Mohenjo-daro (pl. 28). Executed in bronze, of about four inches high, this figure of a young girl in a "half-impudent posture"[3] shows deft artistic handling and a high degree of sophistication. The true significance of the figurine is not known. It has been argued that the young girl is a representative of a temple dancer, an institution not more antiquated than the mediaeval Hindu temple. Whether the figure represents a temple dancer or a social entertainer is of little significance ; for us it is a work of art. The figure is a nude except for one arm which is clothed in a series of bangles. According to Stuart Piggott, her ornaments and complicated coiffure suggest "a sophisticated version of the female type known in the rough. schematized pottery figurines in the Kulli culture."[4] With her right fist resting on the tilted hip, and the other arm hanging free to hold a bowl, this statuette is a triumph of details in linear terms. The dancing line suggests more than it states. The artist has relied more on his intuitive perception of the image than on verisimilitude to nature.

But this cannot be said of the male figure in limestone from Mohenjo-daro. The exact iconographic significance of the figure is elusive. Looking at the downcast glance of the half-shut eyes of this bust, scholars have felt that it might be a portrait of a priest in meditation. The chief features of the figure are its low forehead, straight nose, elongated eyes, thick lips, and a rather fleshy face. Besides having a short moustache, the figure wears a short beard. A robe with a trefoil design on it passes round the left shoulder and under the right arm. The contrast between the figure and the two sculptures discussed above is obvious. As a work of art it is inferior. If the two sculptures are extraordinarily realistic and suggestive, this one is stylistic, formal, and perhaps hieratic.

The plastic skill of the Indus valley people does not exhaust itself in sculpture : a much freer play of aesthetic sensibility is evident in the carved seals or amulets. Over 2,000 seals of the Indus valley

have so far been discovered. These seals are generally made of a soft stone called steatite, and are either square or rectangular. The rectangular seals bear only inscriptions, and have, therefore, no artistic value. The square or oblong ones have delicate engravings besides inscriptions. Two cylindrical steatite seals, like those of the Mesopotamian civilizations, have also been discovered. Normally the square seals are $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches, and are cut in intaglio technique. The subject-matter of these seals is usually figures of animals, such as the bull, buffalo, goat, tiger, and elephant. Carvings on other seals include a flying eagle with a snake, a hero fighting with a tiger, a horned goddess under a *pipal* tree (the tree under which Lord Buddha found Enlightenment), and a horned deity seated in the well-known *yoga* posture. The iconographic meaning of the last named seal has aroused the widest speculations among Indologists. According to Sir John Marshall, whose opinion has found general acceptance, the horned god is the Hindu god Siva. The god is seen surrounded by wild beasts preceisely as Siva is conceived in Hinduism—the Lord of Animals or Pasupati.

Generally speaking, these miniature engravings are fine examples of vigorous draughtsmanship. By far the best examples of plastic skill are to be found in the animal seals, specially those depicting bulls. But for their horns and eyes which are frontally represented, the figures of these bulls are in profile—an arrangement which enabled the artist to express his apprehension of the animal, rather than any particular bull. Art here is not inhibited by direct observation of nature, but is lit up by an intuition which holds up to the enlightened beholder the uniqueness of the artist's vision.

MAURYAN SCULPTURE

More than a millennium separates the Indus valley civilization

from the Maurya period, but this long interregnum is sculpturally barren. Did the sculptural tradition die ? The closeness between the sculpture of the Indus valley and those of later days suggests that the tradition was not lost during those long bleak years, though it is true that we cannot show evidences of such a continuity. Even if explorations fail to discover surviving work of art, the validity of our statement remains unassailed. The tradition at best remained dormant in the racial memory. Into this psychological continuity the court art of the Mauryas introduces a sudden break, a sudden reversal of the tide of consciousness as it were.

The Maurya period was a self-conscious period, conscious of its newly earned imperial might, and the state-sponsored art of the Mauryas reflects it fully. Inspired by the ideals of universal suzerainty, the mighty Mauryas set up the first all-India empire. Tribal political organizations disappeared, and a new imperial outlook emerged. In art the new self-consciousness failed to make use of the obscure stirrings of consciousness latent in the national genius. Proud of its political achievment, the court art of the Maurya alienated itself from the tradition. Small wonder, therefore, that the Maurya court art was "aloof", eclectic, and consciously imitative.

A more intimate contact with the West only intensified this mentality. It must not be assumed that Chandragupta Maurya's successful encounter with Seleucus, the successor of Alexander, meant in any way a severance of connection with the West. The account of the Greek ambassador Megasthenes, on the other hand, testifies to the living contact with the West. Bindusar's request to Antiochus I, the Seleucid king of Syria, for a present of figs, wine, and a Greek sophist, and Antiochus' reply to the son of Chandragupta that a sophist was not for export may not be historical evidence, but certainly this little story adorns the historical truth that the relations

between the East and the West in the Maurya period were both unrestrained and happy.

The court sculpture of the Maurya is an importation from the West. When Alexander conquered Persia in 330 B.C. he was overwhelmed, says Plutarch, by the royal splendour of Persepolis. The Greek artists under the Macedonians could not escape the influence of Achaemenian art and culture, and a new Hellenistic art strongly influenced by Achaemenid followed. It was the influence of this art to which the Maurya court art was exposed. The contact with the West in the field of art, therefore, meant a contact with the art of the Hellenistic West and of the Achaemenids of Iran.

The most important sculptural remains of the court art of the Mauryas are the Asokan columns, generally known by its vernacular name *lat*. These columns were made of stone, and to the Mauryas we owe our first introduction to stone as the medium of sculptural expression. Maurya columns were carved out of grey sandstone from Chunar, near Banaras ; and authorities think that an art-centre probably existed near Chunar from where these columns were supplied. At one time there existed about thirty columns, of which ten in varying states of preservation are found today. Of these ten, two are *in situ* ; one at Basarh-Bakhira and the other at Lauriya-Nandangarh, both in the Champaran district of Bihar on the borders of Nepal. The capitals of the remainder are now preserved in the museums in India. A typical Asokan column is a forty feet monolith from the base to the top, crowned with sculptured capitals, and bears a lustrous polish, a technique which the Maurya craftsmen probably borrowed from the carvers of Persepolis. The polish was obtained by applying coats of silicon varnish (known as *bajralepa* in texts of architecture) on the monoliths.

The simplest Mauryan column can be studied at Lauriya-Nandangarh, erected in 243 B.C. It rises from the ground without

any masonry base. Plain and circular in section, the shaft of the column tapers slightly upwards. The capital is joined to the shaft by means of a copper dowel, while the abacus supports an animal figure. The capital resembles a bell-shaped reversed lotus which is not very different from the bell-capital used in palace architecture in ruins of Persepolis. Hence the Asokan bell-capital bears the appellation 'Persepolitan'.

The sculptural art of the Mauryas flowered in representations of animal figures which crowned the capitals of the columns. From the stylistic point of view the earliest animal figure belongs to the column at Basarh-Bakhira. The crowning lion is crude in execution. The abruptness, with which the tail of the animal turns inwards, jars on our eyes. The locks are clumsily arranged, and the facial expression lacks both vigour and energy. Moreover, the absence of integration of the abacus, the capital, and the shaft also makes the appearance of the lion less organic. The impression that one gets is that the sculptor is not driven by any emotional urge to sculpt, but is painstakingly learning his composition in a foreign idiom. The Lauriya-Nandangarh lion, on the other hand is better executed, though it is hardly free from defect. The rump and the hind legs project beyond the round abacus and seem to hang in the air. The superiority of the lion over the previous example lies in its suggestion of tense movement. The technique, too, shows an advance over the former : the Lauriya-Nandangarh is more finished, more skilled in treatment. In the Rampurva lion capital (Indian Museum, Calcutta) the harmony between the component parts, which we found missing in the two previous examples, was achieved. The transition from the abacus to the capital is smooth. The carver shows superior skill in cutting stone, and as a result, a clear and precise expression has been achieved. Though modelling is powerful, the figure of the lion is conventional and stylized in treatment, as is evident in the schematic treatment of its manes and legs.

The decisive achievement of the court art of the Maurya is the Sarnath column. It crystallizes into distinguished expression the conventional idiom in which Maurya sculptors had been seeking expression. The Sarnath column once stood in the Deer Park, Sarnath, Banaras, where the Buddha "set in motion the Wheel of the Law", that is, preached to his first disciples. Hsuan Tsang's description of the column is worth noting : "A stone pillar about seventy feet high. The stone is altogether as bright as jade. It is glistening and sparkles like light ; and all those who pray fervently before it see from time to time, according to their petitions, figures with good or bad signs. It was here that Tathagata, having arrived at enlightenment, began to turn the wheel of law."[5] The column has survived in fragments : the capital and the remains of a gigantic wheel may be seen in the museum at Sarnath (pl. 29). The famous Sarnath capital, now the state seal of the Indian Republic, is completely un-Indian in its treatment, but thoroughly Indian in conception. The column was adopted by Asoka as the symbol of the conquest by *Dharma* (morality and piety—the Buddhist doctrine). The four lions, seated back to back at the four cardinal points of the compass, represent the spiritual might of the Buddha, for in Pali literature the Buddha is often compared to the lion. He is referred to as Sakyasimha or the Lion of the Sakya clan. The four animals on the abacus—a striding elephant, a galloping horse, a stalking bull, and a prancing lion—are also symbolic of the chief events of the Buddha. In Buddhist literature, as in Buddhist art, the elephant symbolizes the embryonic appearance of the Buddha, the bull his Nativity, the horse the great Renunciation, and the lion the spiritual might and universal sovereignty. The addorsed lions represent the Buddha's conquest of the world by the turning of the Wheel of the Law, better known in its Pali equivalent as *dhammacakkapavattana sutta*. The law refers to the Buddha's preaching in the Deer Park which consists of the "Four Noble

Truths" and the "Noble Eightfold Path". In its treatment of this conception two different styles, both foreign, are noticed. The bell capital, the stiff lions with their mask-like heads, triangular eyes, moustaches represented by incised parallel lines, and the lolling tongue are not far removed from the animal carvings of Persepolis. But the animal reliefs on the abacus suggest a different style. It has been pointed out that the realistic animal figure of the galloping horse, for instance, bears striking resemblance not to any thing from Persepolis but to the steeds on silver-bowls made in Bactria during the Hellenistic occupation. Its borrowed features notwithstanding, the Sarnath quadripartite is a beautiful sculpture. It far surpasses the earlier capitals—the Basarh-Bakhira, the Lauriya-Nandangarh, and the Rampurva—in execution. Sir John Marshall says that "the Sarnath capital..though by no means a masterpiece, is the product of the most developed art of which the world was cognizant in the third century B.C.—the handiwork of one who had generations of artistic effort and experience behind him. In the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development, and in the spirited realism of the reliefs below, there is no trace whatever of the limitations of primitive art."[6] Indeed, the care that has been bestowed on finish, on clear bold delineation, and on harmony of its various parts speaks of an art at once self-conscious, urban, and eclectic.

Exception may be taken, however, to the Rampurva bull, now in the National Museum, Delhi. According to Marshall, the Rampurva bull "fails to harmonize with the capital on which it stands."[7] Certainly it does, but then the strength of the Rampurva bull is not architectonic but plastic. In plastic beauty it is far superior to anything we have discussed so far. The sense of form, the plastic volume, and the texture that it reveals is extraordinary. The emphasis here is not on the conventional schematized pattern ; feeling here is not the dupe of form. On the other hand, the

virility and equipoise which it seeks to express finds a fitting form ; in fact, the two are identified. In former examples the sculptor's feeling for form outstripped his feeling for content ; here the two are in co-operation. Though this remarkable bull in the round belongs to the national tradition, it is not altogether free from foreign influence. The bell-shaped capital and the friezes of honey-suckle, rosette, and palmette on the abacus suggest Hellenistic and Achaemenid origin.

If it is true of the Rampurva bull that it represents a return to the national tradition, it is true in a higher degree of the Dhauli elephant, near Bhubaneswar. In point of craftsmanship it is certainly less advanced than the Sarnath animal figures, but the contrast between the two is obvious. The Dhauli elephant, unlike the Sarnath lions, exhibits a feeling through form, less sophisticated though the form is.

Besides the sculptures cited above, a few sculptures unearthed from various parts of India have also been ascribed to the Maurya period. Together with the Rampurva bull and the Dhauli elephant they reflect an art style which was not alien to the indigenous tradition. These sculptures have been collected from places as far apart as Parkham and Baroda near Mathura, Besnagar and Pawaya in Gwalior, Lohanipur, Didarganj, and Patna in Bihar.

The earliest of the series is the controversial Parkham statue, now preserved in the Mathura Museum. The figure bears the distinctive Maurya polish, and is, therefore, ascribed to the Maurya period ; but the inscription in mutilated *Brahmi* script on the statue refers to one "Kunika Ajatasatru, of the Saisunaga dynasty, who died in 618 B.C." If the reading of the inscription is correct, then the statue would belong to the pre-Mauryan period.[8] Closely related to the statue is the fragment of the sandstone statue of *yaksha* from Baroda, near Parkham, in the same museum. The latter is the taller of the two, but both are marked by solidity,

heaviness, and rigidity. They are of the earth, earthy ; and, as Coomaraswamy happily puts it, "..resting their immense weight firmly on the earth, (they) are immediate and affirmative expressions of physical energy. Life is accepted without question or analysis ; the solid flesh is not idealized."[9] Perhaps the solidity of the *yaksha* figures was symbolic of the mercenariness of the material-minded worshipper. Aesthetically, the treatment in the better-preserved Parkham Yaksha is throughout frontal, and modelling, particularly in the sides, is almost absent. Archaic in appearance and rigid in its effect, the statue of Parkham Yaksha is a forerunner of the Mathura school in the history of the Indian sculpture.

The *chef-d'oeuvre* of the series is, of course, the Didarganj Yakshi, now in the Patna Museum (pl. 30). The Parkham Yaksha is frontal in its representation, but the Didarganj Yakshi is wholly in the round, meant to be viewed from all sides. Hence it is technically more advanced. The figure, 5 feet 3 inches high, carries a fly-whisk which passing over the right shoulder trails on to the ground. The chief features of this figure are its full and ample breast, attenuated waist, and broad hips which represent the ideal of feminine beauty in India. The upper part of the figure is nude, while the lower part is covered by a thin drapery. The complicated hair-do, fine ornaments, and the graceful stance, all point to a typical girl of the *beau monde* of the Maurya period. Though sophisticated and fairly refined as a piece of sculpture, the Didarganj Yakshi is not altogether free from a certain stiffness which attends the statues of the series. Fluid linear movement has been exploited to the full in the modelling of the abdomen, chin, and eyes, and thus a roundness has been achieved ; in the lower half, on the other hand, lushness in the treatment of the drapery notwithstanding, the thighs and feet seem to be lacking in rhythm, thus presenting a contrast to the lyricism of the torso.

BHARHUT, BODHGAYA, AND SANCHI

The political unity which the Mauryas achieved was soon dissipated when about 184 B.C. Pusyamitra Sunga, a brahman general, gained power, and by a *coup d'etat* ousted the last of the Mauryas. The vassal states outside Vidisa, the centre of Sunga kingdom, owned nominal loyalty to the Sunga king ; the country was divided into small political units, and the concept of a centralized state disappeared. This, however, produced no rift in the cultural life of the country ; the great unifying force was the civilizing influence of Buddhism. Its impact was felt with greater force than in the past. In shaping Maurya court art the influence of Buddhism was limited as it was chiefly used for imperial propaganda ; in the post-Mauryan period, on the other hand, the appeal of religion was more democratic and broad based. Budhist art of this period absorbed the folk tradition which the Maurya court art had completely ignored. Such diverse gods and goddesses as *yakshas*, *yakshis*, the *nagas* (the serpent spirits), the *apsaras* (the divine nymphs), the *lokapalas* (the guardians of the quarters of the globe), *Lakshmi* or *Sri* and *Sirimadevata* (the goddesses of fertility and fortune), all figured in the Buddhist art of the period besides the legends of previous incarnations of the Buddha and the life of the historical Buddha. Consequently, the art was no longer eclectic and rootless as it was in the Maurya period.

The sculptural art of the Sunga period is represented on the railings and gateway of the Bharhut *stupa* (the remains of which were removed to the Calcutta Museum in 1875), the railings at Bodhgaya which enclosed the holy *pipal* tree where the Buddha attained Enlightenment, and the ground balustrades and gateways of the Sanchi shrines. In point of time Bharhut is the oldest and is dated about 150 B. C. ; but according to some authorities, the smaller *stupa (stupa II)* at Sanchi is older than the Bharhut *stupa*. The

great *stupa* at Sanchi may be dated about the end of the first century B.C., while the Bodhgaya railings stand somewhere between Bharhut and Sanchi. The cave reliefs of Udayagiri and Khandagiri, Jain in theme, despite local influence are closely affiliated to the spirit of Sunga art. The art of the Sunga period, as revealed in the sculptures at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, and Sanchi, is predominantly illustrative. The method adopted is the time-honoured episodic method of story telling. Incidents were supplied from the fruitful source of the *Jataka* tales and from the life of the historical Buddha. In narrating the story of the Buddha the sculptors were enjoined not to represent the Buddha iconically.[10] Apart from their illustrative value, these stories give us useful material for reconstructing the social history of the time. Court life, city life, and life in the village are all represented in these sculptures. The Bharhut relief of Jetavana Park at Sravasti, for example, reveals the banker Anathapindika employing a cartful of gold coins to cover the surface of the garden. Scenes from the history also occur in these reliefs, the chief among them being representations of Ajatasatru and Prasenajit's visits to the Buddha.

From Bharhut to Bodhgaya and then to Sanchi, the art of the period shows a continuous development. The most striking feature of this art is that these carvings are not governed by the law of optics. The sculptor is more interested in portraying the essential truth of the subject-matter. At first hesitant and somewhat gawky, as at Bharhut, the art soon blessoms in free linear rhythm at Sanchi. The hesitant character of the Bharhut art may be explained by a few representative sculptures. Take, for instance, the figure of Sirima Devata (pl. 31). The sculpture is neatly chiselled, and the guiding principle is frontality. Depth does not play any significant part, and both surface and volume are flatly concieved. The same, however, cannot be said of the Chulakoka Devata. There is in it a much freer play of curves, and frontality is relieved by a swaying grace achieved

no doubt by skilful manipulation of linearism (pl. 32). The figures in the Ajatasatru pillar, on the other hand, show a steep decline from the excellence achieved in the Chulakoka Devata. Harsh and stylized in appearance, these figures revert to the primitive technique which informs the reliefs on the ground balustrade of *stupa II* at Sanchi.

Nevertheless, the Bharhut carvings clearly indicate the course of future development. One would naturally look forward to an effective use of the kind of gliding linear rhythm aspired to in the execution of the Chulakoka Devata. The next stage of development is marked in the railings of Bodhgaya. Little trace of archaicness is left ; the figures are more rounded. The art of narrative, too, shows a development. The exhaustive details of the Bharhut narratives have been replaced by subtle suggestive touches. The treatment of Jetavana Park, for instance, which appears both at Bharhut and Bodhgaya shows that clearly. The 'dubbing' that Bharhut sculptors affixed to each story for identification also disappears. But it is in the gateways of the great *stupa* at Sanchi that the high-watermark of this art is reached. Apart from conscious use of depth, dimensions, and chiaroscuro, the sculptor now relies fully on flowing linear movement to chisel more significance out of stone. Plant life, animal life, human life, all become a part of the ceaseless flow of life, and are held together by the swaying grace of linear rhythm. In fact, form here is inseparably woven into the meaning. Life is presented in its dramatic confiict and epic grandeur. The scenes of exciting struggle, such as the "war of the relics" (South gate and West gate), the scene of renunciation, the Buddha departing from Kapilavastu (West gate, middle architrave), the conversion of the Kasyapas (East gate) (pl. 33), the flower motifs (North gate), the figures of the two peacocks, and the winged deer (North gate) are some of the examples of the richness and variety of these sculptures. The range becomes all the more comprehensive when we see the

objects not in isolation, but in relation to each other as parts of the great stream of life that runs through the world, and dances in rhythmic measures. The art here is the art of inclusion, an art based on a joyous acceptance of life uninhibited by conscious intellectualism or religious dogma.

The link with the tradition, which was broken as a result of the intrusion of Achaemenid and Hellenistic art style during the brief triumph of Maurya court art, was restored in the sculptural forms at Bharhut, Bodhgaya, and Sanchi. The generic likeness between Mohenjo-daro-Harappa art and the Sunga art is obvious. The art of Mohenjo-daro-Harappa shows an aversion to the natural method of representation. The artist, in his keeness to represent idea-image, relied more on linearism than on depth, dimensions, and volume. Hence the more distinct and rhythmic the line grew, the more perfect the art became. Though sculpture is primarily an art of volume and space, to the Indian sculptors, line, not volume and space, was primary. Given a sensitive line, particularly when the medium is stone, the rest, they felt, would fall in place. The kinship between the plastic art of Mohenjo-daro-Harappa and that of Bharhut, Bodhgaya, and Sanchi can be explained by a comparison of the linearism exemplified by the figurine of the dancing girl from Mohenjo-daro (pl. 28) and the supple grace of the swinging *yakshi* of the Sanchi *stupa* (pl. 2). The latter shows a development within the framework of the common convention and tradition. The technique adopted was also identical. The plastic articulation of the *yakshi* was achieved simply in linear terms by intuition, rather than by any objective display of scientific knowledge. The swelling roundness of the body suggested by full breasts and bulbous hips, and accentuated further by the constricting tightness of the belt, is the work of nervous and sensitive lines. Depth, dimensions, and volume were achieved not by way of conscious pursuit ; they sprang from triumphant linearism.

GANDHARA SCHOOL

At the fall of the Maurya power India lay defenceless against the repeated foreign invasions of the Bactrian Greeks, the Pahlavas (Parthians), and the Kushanas from the North-Western India, who poured through the passes into the fertile land of the Five Rivers (Punjab). Scramble for power followed, but none of these tribes, except the Kushanas, a section of the Chinese Yueh-chih, could succeed in building up a strong centralized government. Under the leadership of Kanishka the Kushanas acquired a vast empire which included extensive areas in Central Asia and the western half of Northern India up to Banaras. Kanishka's reign is of utmost importance to us. Kanishka was a Buddhist, and under his patronage the fourth general council of the Buddhist church was held in Kashmir. The council saw the beginning of the schism which led to the formation of the Mahayana and the Hinayana sects. Under the Kushanas two schools of sculpture flourished: one at Gandhara (the North-Western provinces of India and part of Afghanistan), and the other at Mathura. The Gandhara school of sculpture was active between the end of the first century A.D. and the invasions of the White Huns (Hephthalites) in the fifth century. Ousted from its provenance, the art was practised in Kashmir till about the seventh century A.D. The impact of the Gandhara school was felt more outside India—in China, Korea, and Japan—than in India itself. In India it remained away from the main art tradition and constituted, as Coomaraswamy says, "an episode and not a stage in a continuous development."[11]

Very few Gandhara images can be dated, and the chronology of Gandhara art, like the chronology of Kushana dynasty, has been a matter of considerable dissension among historians. It is generally agreed, however, that sculptures made of grey slate belong to the early phase, while stucco and terra-cotta sculptures to the later phase, from the third century A.D. onwards. It is also agreed that the

highest expression of Gandhara art was achieved during the reigns of Kanishka and Huvishka. The school of Gandhara is sometimes designated as Graeco-Buddhist, but the researches of art critics have proved that the term is misleading for two reasons. First, the school did not spring up when the Bactrian Greeks held Gandhara ; and secondly, the Gandhara art is not affiliated to Greek art but to the provincial art of the Roman empire. Gandhara art, it has been pointed out, drew its sustenance from the art of the Roman West.

Gandhara art is a hybrid art ; it is an adaptation of the Roman style to the representation of the oriental subject-matter—the images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Large demands were made upon artists by the Buddhist patrons to turn out images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The craftsmen, to be sure, knew what to represent, yet the Gandhara images are palpably un-Indian. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that the craftsmen who executed orders of their patrons were also foreigners. The copper-gilt reliquary of King Kanishka unearthed from the *stupa* at Shahji-ki-dheri, preserved in Peshawar Archaeological Museum, bears an inscription in *Kharoshthi* which proclaims that it is the work of "Agesilaos, overseer of Kanishka's *stupa*". Like Agesilaos, many craftsmen were in the employ of Kushana patrons. No wonder that out of their studios emerged the images of the Buddha arrayed in the Roman toga and Bodhisttva decorated with a luxuriant moustache.

The symbolic character of the Buddha disappeared as a result of Mahayana Buddhism,[12] for the dominant note of the new sect was devotion to a personal god. The Buddha came to be represented as an incarnation much as Vishnu and Siva are envisaged in the *Puranas*. The Mahayana philosophy and literature of the first century A.D. are full of intense reverence for the exalted figure of the Master. A classic expression of the new attitude occurs in the *Buddhacharita*, an epic by the poet Asvaghosa. This wonderful epic, written sometime in the second century A.D., did much to

popularize the conception of the Buddha as the superman. But it is through the plastic art of Gandhara and Mathura that the new Buddha became known amongst the laity. In representing the figure of the Buddha the artist had, however, to conform to the norm laid down in the literature of the Mahayana sect.

According to the Mahayana sect, the Buddha is endowed with thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks. Except three, most of the other marks are rather unimportant. Of these three, the first is the cranial protuberance or *ushnisha*. The second mark is the tuft of hair or *urna* in the middle of the brow, the symbol of the third or the mind's eye. The third mark is the stigmata of the wheel on his palms and on his soles. The Buddha can be represented as either seated or standing, and in either position he is endowed with some gestures of his hand and fingers, called *mudras*, which are symbolic of the various actions of the Buddha. Thus in the gesture of contemplation *(dhyanamudra)* the Buddha is shown sitting cross-legged in *yogic* meditation, his hands rest on the lap, while the palms are laid one over the other. A classic instance of this gesture is the seated Buddha from Anuradhapura, Ceylon. The second well-known gesture is the earth-touching gesture *(bhumisparsamudra)*, symbolic of the Buddha's triumph over Mara, the Evil tempter. The fingers in this gesture point to the earth. In the wheel-turning gesture *(dharmachakramudra)* the hands are shown in the position of setting the Wheel of the Law in motion. The gesture stands both for the First Preaching at Sarnath and moral teaching in general. The gesture of reassurance *(abhayamudra)* shows the right hand raised from the elbow, with the vertically open palm indicating fingers which fan out as a symbol of protective assurance.

The Gandhara Buddha "follows Indian tradition in every essential of its inconography"[13], and yet the treatment by Gandhara sculptors remained largely outlandish. The Gandhara artists were good craftsmen, but they lacked the artist's essential power to reveal an intuitive

grasp of the form which they sought to impart. The Gandhra Buddhas are formally correct ; we miss in them the essential Indian conception. The Buddha was often transformed into an Apollo and Maya, the mother of the Buddha, into the Dryad queen. This point has been effectively made by Benjamin Rowland in his analysis of the Buddha figure, preserved in the Guides' Mess at Hoti-Mardan, near Peshawar. "The resemblance of the head", says Rowland, "with its adolescent features and wavy hair, to the Apollo Belvedere is immediately apparent. As in countless other Gandhara images, the cranial protuberance or ushnisha has been disguised by an adaptation of the top-knot or *krobylos* of the Greek sun-god. The only reliance on the descriptions of the magic marks or *lakshana* appropriate to a Buddha is to be observed in the elongated ear-lobes and the definition of the *urna* or "third eye" between the brows. Even the pose of this image with the Praxitelean *dehanchement* of the body beneath the robe might have been borrowed from the Greek Apollo type. The over-garment itself, recognizable as a representation of the Buddhist mantle or sanghati, is carved in a manner extremely suggestive of Imperial draped statues of the first century A.D. in Rome. The entirely successful realization of the mantle as a free-standing voluminous substance separate from the body beneath. and the definition of the folds in a system of deeply carved parallel swags, are immediately reminiscent of such familiar Roman prototypes as the statute of Augustus from Prima Porta in the Terme Museum at Rome."[14]

The hybrid character of Gandhara art is nowhere more marked than in the relief from Loriyan Tangai, depicting the *Nirvana* of the Buddha, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The relief is a not altogether congruous combination of Roman realism and the intuitive linearism characteristic of Indian art. Roman realism is evident in the expression of grief of the mourners, whereas the Indian emphasis on intuitive apprehension is apparent from the many

tiers of figures (pl. 34). The spatial perspective in this relief reminds us of the Sanchi relief of the conversion of the Kasyapa clan (pl. 33). The placing of mourners one above the other militates against the Roman law of persepective, and is in the nature of a compromise with Indian sculptural practice.

Gandhara art of the first phase was limited to about one hundred and fifty years, from the latter half of the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. The Buddha figures of the first phase are characterized by their gentle and serene expression. The Buddha from Takht-i-bahi, now in Berlin, the standing Buddha from Hoti-Mardan Guides' Mess are some of the representative examples of the first phase of the Gandhara school. The second century A.D. was a period of slump, but from the third century onwards Gandhra sculpture blossomed again. During this phase stone as a medium of plastic expression was replaced by the stucco and terra-cotta. The two centres where this later phase was most active are Mohra Moradu and Jaulian. This phase of the Gandhara school was also noted for its figures of Bodhisattvas and a few sculptures of purely secular subjects, such as the attractive Head of Youth and Male Head, both in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the Head of a Young Man (Bodhisattva) in the National Museum, Delhi. The Seated Buddha in schist, now in the Royal Scottish Museum at Edinburgh, stands out for its fine proportions and its neat chiselling.

MATHURA SCHOOL

The city of Mathura held at the time of the Kushanas both religious and commercial importance. Commercially, it was the converging point of ancient trade routes. Its religious importance lay in the fact that it was an active centre of both Buddhist and

Jain faiths. According to the Chinese traveller Fa-hsien, whose account is full of information about the religious life in India, Mathura had twenty Buddhist monasteries.

The school of Mathura took shape about the end of the first century B.C. The studios of Mathura turned out a rich repertoire in mottled red sandstone, and the fame of Mathura must have spread all over the North, for samples to be found as far as Sarnath. The representative sculptures of Mathura may be seen today at the Curzon Museum, Mathura. Though Mathura was under the Kushana kings, its sculptures remained predominantly indigenous. The school of Mathura is descended from the Bharhut-Bodhgaya-Sanchi school, noticed before. Noteworthy among the subjects of the Mathura school are the Jain 'tablet of homage', the figures of *yaksha* and *yakshi*, the images of Bodhisattva, and the royal statues of the Kushana kings.

The earliest Mathura sculptures are those of the Jain votive plaques, called *ayagapattas (aryakapatras)*. They were perhaps put up in the Jain shrines for worship. These plaques bear decorative designs with the images of *Tirthankaras* or chief saints of the Jain faith in the centre. An *ayagapatta* from Kankali Tila, now in the Lucknow Museum, showing a naked cross-legged Jain saint deep in meditation, is a fine piece of work owing nothing to foreign influence. The so-called 'Holi' relief, preserved in the Mathura Museum, is another votive plaque noted for its use of perspective. It is quite possible that the figure of the Jain saints in these slabs might have served as models to the Mathura sculptors for the representation of the figures of Bodhisattvas.

Mathura has yielded many a fine image of *yakshis*. These alto-relievo sculptures, gathered from the sites in and around Mathura, were perhaps part of the railings of the Jain *stupas*. But affiliation to the Jain faith has left no mark on the treatment of the *yakshis*. They belong to the same tradition as those of Bharhut, Bodhgaya,

Sanchi, and look back to the Mohenjo-daro dancing girl. They have the same attenuated waist, bulbous hips, and round fleshy breasts. In point of execution, however, the *yakshis* of Mathura show an advance. The development is toward nimbler movement and greater poise. The expression is more urbane, more sophisticated. The point may be illustrated by a reference to two lively figures of *yakshis* in the railing pillars from Bhutesvara, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The *yakshis* are seen standing on crouching dwarfish figures. Above the head of each *yakshi* on the projecting balcony may be seen a few figures. The maiden in the left hand pillar clasps a bunch of grapes in her right hand, while the same hand rests on the girdle of the first maiden. The figures are seminude, and the sculptor has made full use of his technique to emphasize the erotic appeal by the coquettish tilt of the head, and a suggestion of abandon in the entire body.

The figures of *yakshis* apart, a few royal statues of the Kushana kings have been found in the village of Mat, near Mathura. The statue of Wima Kadphises (Mathura Museum) shows the king seated on a throne, wearing a tunic and felt boots. The dress is foreign, and the execution of the portrait poor. The much-discussed statue of this group is the headless figure of Kanishka in the same museum. The inscription across the bottom of the long coat bears the legend "The great King, the King of Kings, His Majesty Kanishka". The great king is seen here standing with legs apart, with a sword in one hand. He is clothed in a long coat, and shod in quilted boots. As a piece of portrait-sculpture, it is evidently a poor performance. The harsh angles and sharp frontality of this two-dimensional statue possess neither the pliability nor the suppleness of plasticity seen in the figures of *yakshis*. The rather abrupt deterioration in craftsmanship is apt to cause us surprise, and can be explained by the fact that though the provenance of the statue was Mathura, its inspiration came from Rome via the

Kushana kings, as they, too, like the vainglorious Caesars, wanted to flaunt themselves. But the sculptors of Mathura had hardly inherited any tradition of portraiture, hence they produced what best they could—lifeless and formal royal portraits in stone.

Close to the royal statues, but infinitely superior to them, are the controversial groups of drunken and Bacchanalian statuaries. One such group may be seen in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The subject-matter, revealed in the drapery and in the carriage of the figures, is foreign but the execution is throughout in the style of the Mathura school. The situation here is just the reverse of Maurya court art where the treatment was foreign, but the subject-matter was native. The same criticism applies to the so-called Herakles with the Nemean Lion in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Anomalies and incongruities such as these were only to be expected from the contact with a foreign rule.

Whether the Buddha image was of Hellenistic or of Indian origin will perhaps remain an unsolved scholastic puzzle, but it can safely be said that to the Mathura sculptors we owe the first Indian representation of the Buddha. The earliest Buddha image belonging to the Mathura school has been discovered at Sarnath, and is now in the Sarnath Museum. It is dedicated by a certain Friar Bala in the third year of the reign of Kanishka. Another Buddha image dedicated by the same Friar Bala and found at Saheth-Maheth (Sravasti) is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. The Sarnath Buddha is nude to the waist ; the lower half is clothed in a *dhoti* (waist-cloth). His left hand over the hip supports the trailing folds of his robe. The broken right hand, which was probably raised, is expressive of the gesture of reassuarance. According to the caption on the picture post-card issued by the Department of Archaeology, India, the figure represents Bodhisattva ; but the crouching lion between the legs would rather lead one to think that the portrait represents the Buddha, the lion of the Sakya

clan. However, the kindly smile and the complacent obesity of the figure of the Buddha reminds us of the colossal mundane *vaksha* figures chiselled by the Sunga sculptors. No less important is the seated Buddha from Katra in the Mathura Museum. The general appearance of the Buddha is identical with the standing Buddha, except that an attempt has been made at group composition. The right hand here is intact, and is raised in the gesture of reassurance ; the left hand rests on the thigh (pl. 35). The contrast between the Buddhas of the Mathura school and those belonging to the later school strikes even a casual observer. While the later Buddha is completely spiritual, the Mathura Buddha is completely mundane. A kind of primal innocence born of faith in the seductions of the flesh seems to be the inspiration of the Buddha images of the Mathura school.

THE SCHOOL OF VENGI

When the schools of Gandhara and Mathura were developing in the North, the Vengi school appeared in South India. The lower valleys of Krishna and Godavari were important centres of Buddhism in the South. The sculptures which once adorned the *stupas* have now been unearthed from the various sites, such as Nagarjunikonda, Alluru, Gumadidurru, Goli, as well as from Amaravati. They prove that the artistic activity in the South was both abundant and fertile. The crowning glory of the Vengi school is, of course, the sculptures from Amaravati which now adorn the rooms of the British Museum, London, and the Government Museum of Madras. These sculptures were distributed over five centuries. The symbolic representations of the Buddha belonged to the second century B. C., while the anthropomorphic images of the Buddha date from the second century A.D.

Both in execution and in treatment of the subject-matter the Amaravati sculptures are different from those of Bharhut, Sanchi, Gandhara, and Mathura. The Bharhut-Sanchi reliefs, particularly the latter, show a vibrant appreciation of life. Sympathy was not limited to human beings alone, but extended to animal and even vegetable life. All life lived here below was equally important to the Sanchi sculptors, since life is a continuous stream, and souls migrate from one existence to another. In the reliefs at Amaravati, on the other hand, the focus is on man and his activities. Nature recedes into the background. Speaking of the Amaravati sculptures Bachhofer says, "The men are the main point, and it is their actions and doings which are to be perceived above all ; whereas the landscape and the architectural surroundings come in the second place and the eye is expected to dwell on them only as upon something accompanying the tenor of human actions."[15]

The rapturous paean of worldly life makes the Amaravati sculptures what they are : "the most voluptuous and the most delicate flower of Indian sculpture."[16] The contrast between the Bharhut, Sanchi, and Mathura sculptures on the one hand, and those of the Amaravati is apparent. The former is characterized by a sensual earthiness, the latter by a dynamic humanism. The elasticity of movement which is so evident in the Amaravati sculptures demanded of the artist superior knowledge of craftsmanship, a demand which was adequately met. Artistic representation of the urban and court life, as reflected in the riotous festivities in the relief medallions, necessitated a sense of dramatic variety and objective comprehension, and the sculptures bear eloquent testimony to this significant triumph of art.

The Amaravati sculptures are beautifully balanced between high tension and easy serenity. The coherence attained by the rhythmic lines which bind the slender, long-legged figures in various movements is a proof of superior modelling. Take, for instance, the medallion relief depicting demigods carrying the Buddha's alms-bowl to heaven,

now in the Government Museum, Madras. The vigorous action of the ecstatic demigods has been visualized from all angles—front, back, sideways, and this is evidently an improvement on verticality and frontality found in the sculptures of the earlier schools. The relief medallions of Amaravati show, apart from superior knowledge of gliding elasticity of movement, superior skill in arranging various planes and a knowledge of foreshortening and depth. Without this technical mastery, the Amaravati artists could not have brought out the subtle and varied interplay of motions epitomized in these reliefs.

GUPTA SCULPTURE

Out of the political shambles in North India following the decline of the Kushanas, a new centralized government emerged under the Gupta kings. India enjoyed security and good government under the Gupta dynasty for more than two hundred years. The intercourse with the Western world was severed, and new foreign relations with the Far East were established. In religion the age saw the efflorescence of Brahmanic theism which was tolerent, eclectic, and syncretic in spirit. Brahmanic religion became the religion of the Guptas, and the deeds and thoughts of the Indian people were as thoroughly charged with religion as they are with the shibboleths of political slogans and the sloppiness of the cinema today. India became the land of Brahmanism, "the country of the Brahmans", as Hsuan Tsang found it in the seventh century A.D.

Resulting from the political security, intellectual and artistic activities reached their fullest expansion during the period. The Gupta age is thus compared to the age of Pericles in Athens and of Augustus in Rome. In philosophy the age saw the formulation of the six systems, in poetry and drama the works of Kalidasa, Dandin, Bharavi, and Visakhadatta. Older works, such

as the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, were reedited and rearranged in their present form, and religious text-books, the *Dharmasastras*, containing moral and legal injunctions, were finally codified. Notable advances were made in medical science, astronomy, and mathematics. Dancing and music, too, were developed. The centres of learning, such as Nalanda, Takshasila, and Vikramasila, made significant contribution towards the development of secular and religious studies.

The eulogies of Hsuan Tsang indicate that plastic art during the Gupta period kept pace with other aesthetic forms. Of the splendid Gupta sculptures that Hsuan Tsang might have seen, only a few specimens have escaped the ravages of Huna and Muslim raiders. But those which have survived are priceless, and one can say that art has here reached a stage of fulfilment and maturity. The potentialities of the plastic style, partially revealed in the various local styles of sculpture, were finally explored and fully realized during the age under an all-embracing community of taste. Hence if one of the signs of maturity is the development towards a common style, Gupta art is a mature art, because the products of the age are clearly marked by a uniform style. The assimilative genius of the age made it possible to refine and synthesize the local and provincial styles that obtained in Bharhut, Bodhgaya, Sanchi, Mathura, and Amaravati. Such a common style remained for all time to come the generally accepted standard of Indian plastic idiom. Objection is sometimes raised against it on the ground that monotony and dullness in Indian sculpture is due to it, but it may be pointed out that the difference between any two best sculptures in the Gupta idiom is as marked as that between two different vintages of a wine to a sensitive palate.

The fulfilment and maturity that we notice in Gupta art followed from the healthy blend of critical activity and creative sensibility. The Gupta age brought to bear upon its aesthetic practice both

intellectual and critical discipline. Iconography, painting, music, and dancing developed as intellectual disciplines, and principles governing the practice of fine arts were precisely formulated. Among the books on aesthetics written during the age the most important were *Vishnudharmottaram*, *Silparatnam*, and *Sukranitisara*. A common alertness unified the fine arts in the Gupta age. Thus the aesthetic sensibility revealed in Kalidasa's poetry finds its plastic counterpart in sculptures. Again, painting was not divorced from sculpture ; a community of taste knit them together.

Sculptures conformed to certain well-defined canons, one of which was the canon of proportions or *talamana*. The basic unit in proportion is the *tala*, roughly equivalent to the measure of the face from the hair on the forehead to the chin. The *tala* is divided into *angulas*, one *angula* being one twelfth of a *tala*. In order to represent the images of deities the sculptors were enjoined to adopt the *dasatala* or the "ten-head" measurement. Three varieties of the *dasatala* were evolved : *uttama*, *madhyama* and *adhama*, measuring 124, 120, and 116 *angulas* respectively. Commenting on this convention a critic says, "Both Polycleitos and Virtruvius, the Greek and Roman authors of the Canons of Proportions, adopt the law of "Eight Heads"—the normal human standard—as the basis of their system of proportions, while the Indian sculptor adopts for his images the *dasatala*, or the "ten-head" measure ; that is to say, he divises and adopts for images proportions which are above the ordinary human standard".[17]

Subordination of anatomical details is another aesthetic convention of the age. A typical Gupta sculpture—and this is also true of the pre-Guptan sculptures—does not represent the joints of the body and contours of muscle. As a result it became possible for the sculptors to produce an impression of pliability and roundness of figure which, though not naturalistic in the crude sense of the term, is formal, abstract, and supersensuous.

The aesthetics of gestures (*mudras*), finger-plays and hand-poses,

to which reference has already been made, were further developed in the Gupta age. Most frequently used gestures were *katakahasta*, *lolahasta*, and *anjalihasta*. The *katakahasta*, symbolic of the hand holding a lotus, signifies communication. The *anjalihasta* or the gesture of devotion is indicated by two hands joined palm to palm. The *lolahasta*, sometimes called *lambahasta* or *gajahasta*, signifying repose, is represented by the hand hanging down, the arm being kept rigid.

Various attitudes or *asanas* were vital to the aesthetic canons of the age. The three positions in which figures were represented are : standing, seated, and recumbent. The reclining figure may be illustrated by the Vishnu mounted on Sesha Naga in the Vishnu temple at Deogarh. A standing figure is represented in either of the four poses : *samabhanga* (equally bent pose), *abhanga* (slightly bent pose), *tribhanga* (triple flexion), and *atibhanga* (extremely bent pose). The South Indian images of Nataraja, for example, are representatives of *atibhanga* pose, suggesting dynamic movement and violent emotion. The three familiar seated postures are : *vajraparyanka* (adamantine pose), *padmaparyanka* (slightly relaxed pose), and *ardhaparyanka* (relaxed pose).

All these canons were drawn upon freely by Gupta artists for the representation of human and superhuman figures. With regard to feminine beauty also there were set conventions. Artists and poets sought analogies from animal and vegetable forms to construct the ideal of feminine charm. The face of a woman, it was felt, should be round like a hen's egg or like the moon. Full breasts should resemble "blooming lotuses and inverted golden pots". Thighs were likened to plantain stalks, while a thin waist was modelled on the attenuated middle of a wasp. The lips were compared to the *bimba* fruit, the chin to the mango stone, the neck to the conch shell. Different expressions of eyes were suggested by different nature similies. Thus innocent maidens were

said to be fawn-eyed, and the restless glance of a handsome girl was compared to the darting little *safari* fish.

These conventions did not, however, make the art of the Gupta unrealistic, hidebound, and rigid ; on the other hand they provided an abstraction from actual life necessary for creating enduring works of art. Gupta sculptors made effective use of these conventions. A perfect balance between the sensuous and the supersensuous was established, and the cleavage between sense and spirit, which was wide in the sculptures of earlier schools, disappeared. Coomaraswamy says, "Gupta art is the flower of an established tradition, a polished and perfected medium like the Sanskrit language, for the statement of thought and feeling ; and having thus become an ordered language with a grammar and vocabulary of its own, its forms are by hypothesis conventioned ('agreed upon') and ideal. ."[18]

Gupta style radiated mainly from two centres—Mathura and Sarnath. The earliest Gupta sculpture, according to Stella Kramrisch, is the Bodhisattva of Trikamala from Bodhgaya, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Though it appears from Bodhgaya, the style indicates that its provenance was Mathura. Looking at the figure, one feels that it has not yet cast off the earthiness of the Mathura sculptures. And yet, for all its rigidity and earthiness, the figure is expressive of serenity and grace. The addition of grace is the result of the new aesthetic outlook. The Bodhisattva torso from Sanchi (Victoria and Albert Museum) is another fine example of early Gupta art.

The serenity of Gupta sculptures was achieved by a felicitous combination of rhythmic linear outline and rounded plasticity of the model. Nowhere has this been more marked than in the Sarnath Buddhas. The subtle synthesis is best noticed in the sublime image of the Buddha preaching the first sermon, now in the Sarnath Museum (pl. 36). Carved out of Chunar sandstone, the Buddha is

represented seated in *yogic* meditation, flanked by two demigods. The finger-language indicates that the Master is in the act of turning the Wheel of the Law or *dharmachakra*. Below, on the pedestal, may be seen the wheel, while on both sides of it are seen two groups of kneeling monks, three on one and four on the other. The beautifully carved nimbus *siraschakra*, which became the acknowledged Gupta convention, is different from both the plain Kushana halo and the over-ornate Mughul nimbus. What is striking about the Buddha image is the measure of ease and pliability achieved within the conventional framework of rigid and static *vajraparyanka* posture. The young face, half-closed eyes, and slight smile soften the rigidity of the attitude ; and the rounded plasticity of the sculpture, which melts in the fluid linear movement, invests the image with poise and illumination. The Sarnath Buddha remains a great masterpiece, and one of the greatest religious sculptures of the world. The lovely head of the Buddha in the National Museum, Delhi, irradiates the same serene inner joy noticed in the Buddha from Sarnath.

The extensive influence of the Gupta style, no doubt the result of the stability of the Gupta empire, may be noticed in the sculptures from the various parts of the country. Gwalior has yielded many fine sculptures in Gupta idiom, chief of which are the cheerful smiling figure of the Sun-god (Surya) and the reliefs of the dancer and musicians on the lintel slab from Pawaya, near Gwalior, and the bust of a lady (Vardhana) in the National Museum, Delhi. The sculptures from Vishnu temple (Deogarh), already referred to, depicting scenes from the *Ramayana*, if less perfect in execution, are nevertheless full of voluptuous grace and easy linear movement. One of the most significant examples of the Gupta sculptures is the relief of the Great Boar at the entrance to the cave at Udayagiri, near Bhilsa. The theme of this relief is one of the incarnations of the god Vishnu who transformed himself

into a boar in order to rescue the earth from the cosmic inundation. Though the style is influenced by the local tradition of rock-carving, its relatedness to the Gupta style is obvious. Kramrisch says, "Cosmic myths are wrested from the stone in a language of pure plastic form. Upheavels of the sun, water and earth coagulate into compositions for which there is no man-made law. Primevally organic in its animal-human appearance, Vishnu-Varaha rises from the waters ; the latter, however, are but a regularly incised pattern of parallel wavy lines, unruffled by the mythical event. The rising and penetrating of the lingering, heavy, yet commanding mass of Vishnu betrays no effort in carrying out its mission of rescuing the earth-goddess. The body, from its elephantine legs and arms, gathers the dignity of cosmic confidence in human shoulders and boar's head."[10]

Sculptures from Bengal, for all their regional differences, show a marked influence of the Gupta style. Perhaps the most impressive sculpture from Bengal is the life-size Sultanganj Buddha, now in Birmingham Museum. Cast in the *cire perdue* or wax-lost process, this bronze image of the Buddha in *abhanga* stance shows not only the rarefied sensibility of the Gupta style, but also the metallurgical skill of the Gupta masters. The stucco figures on the Buddhist brick structure, known as Maniyar Matha, at Rajgir are fine specimens of the supple plasticity of the Gupta style.

In the Deccan, the reliefs from the rock-cut caves at Badami, Ajanta, Karli, and Aurangabad, though strictly belonging to the Deccan tradition, reveal traces of the Gupta idiom. The powerful dynamism displayed in the relief of Vishnu in Cave 4 at Badami is incompatible with the serenity noticed in the Gupta sculptures. The sculptured Buddhas in Ajanta caves of the Mahayana phase are no doubt influenced by the Gupta ideal, but they lack the subtle cerebration which is so profoundly and abundantly felt in the Ajanta paintings.

POST-GUPTA SCULPTURE

The political liquidation of the Gupta empire occured in the sixth century, but the decline of Gupta civilization did not set in until a century later. About the eighth century the artistic conventions formulated in the Gupta period hardened, and what had been flexible ideals became rigid and moribund. The post-Gupta sculpture hovered uncertainly between the hieratic and the erotic. The first tendency was due to the all-powerful priestly class, and the second often derived from coarse plutocratic patrons. The mitre yielded to the crown and holy priests thought nothing of decorating temple walls with shapely images of celestial and divine nymphs.

Post-Gupta sculpture expressed itself through a blossoming of regional style as in the Deccan and Tamil land where Gupta ideals penetrated late, or encountered resistance in course of penetrating, according to the intensity of the local and regional consciousness. The so-called renaissance in the South and the Deccan is not therefore the late blossoming of the Gupta ideal. However, the artists of the Deccan and Tamil land gained rather than lost from the infiltration of Gupta culture. It became easier for the sculptors and imagers to pursue their vocation. As to the subject-matter of their art, they could fall back on the *Puranas* and *Agamic* literature. Iconographic details were laid down in text-books, and the technique of representation was made the easier by manuls of aesthetics.

The Deccanese tradition of sculpture found its fullest expression in the rock-cut caves. The sculptures preserved in the Brahmanical caves, such as Ravana-ka-Khai, Dasavatara, Ramesvara, Dhumar Lena, and above all in the temple of Kailasa at Ellora are noted for freer movement and powerful action. But the power and dynamism belongs rather to the earth than to the rarefied mental world which one comes to associate with Gupta sculptures. Nor

is there the rounded serenity ; a vigorous vitality finds a freer play instead.

In the Tamil land under the patronage of the Pallava kings artistic activity awoke after a torpor which followed when the Vengi school declined. The Pallava school could not escape the influence of the Deccanese tradition, but in the main it was animated by the artistic inheritance of the Vengi school. The Deccanese influence is noticed in the heaviness of sculptural forms ; the impact of the Vengi school is, on the other hand, discernible in the graceful elongated forms. Upon these two foundations Pallava sculptors laid their own contribution of poise and controlled movement. One of the most notable performances of the Tamil land is the relief of the Descent of the Ganga or Arjuna's Penance, executed on the rock-face at Mahabalipuram. This wonderful relief is over eighty feet in length and twenty-three feet in height, the whole area being divided by a natural cleft exploited to represent the river Ganga. Coomaraswamy explains the relief as follows : "The key to the meaning of the composition is to be found in the shrine and yogi worshipper on the left of the cleft. Two interpretations have been offered. According to that implied in the popular name "Arjuna's Penance", the emaciated yogi is Arjuna, who thus propitiated Shiva in the Himalayas, in order to obtain the boon of the use of the miraculous arms of Indra. Shiva appeared in the form of a hunter, engaged Arjuna in combat (the Kiratarjuniya) and after overcoming him bestowed on him the weapons of Indra. According to another interpretation, the whole composition represents the descent of Ganga, in which case the yogi must be identified as Bhagiratha ; the *naga* figures occupying the cleft are cited in support of this suggestion ; but it is hardly possible that water should ever have actually flowed from above, as the advocates of this theory have supposed."[20]

Apart from sculptures in stone, the Tamil land is noted for its fine bronze, and under the Cholas a school of bronze-casters turned

out fine specimens of sculptures. Though bound by rigid and fixed iconographical rules, the best of the Chola bronzes are distinguished by their graceful contours and smooth texture. In addition to the figures of gods and goddesses, the Tamil bronze-casters produced many figures of saints, kings, and queens. A good example is the life-size bronze of Krishna Deva Raya and his queens, already referred to. It is indeed a work of fine imagination, but the noblest flight of conception is displayed in the images of dancing Siva or Nataraja.

In Eastern India under the Pala and Sena kings, in Bihar and Bengal respectively, between the eighth and twelfth centuries, an independent school of sculpture throve, though it preserved the Gupta atmosphere. Made in the local black stone, these sculptures produce an effect of fine metallic finish. Post-Gupta sculpture in Northern India reached its baroque culmination in the erotic sculptures at Bhubaneswar, Konarak, Khajuraho, and Mont Abu. In addition to the controversial erotic sculptures, Konarak produced many a fine animal sculpture found in the courtyard of the Sun Temple. The mediaeval northern sculptures, represented here by two illustrations (pls. 37 and 38), are distinguished by their lush sensuality, but they lack the emotional sensibility which attends Gupta sculpture.

PAINTING

AJANTA

AS with sculpture, so with painting in ancient India : it was pursued not for its own sake ; but was undertaken to subserve a religious purpose, so that people might be taught in vivid manner of the truths of religion. Though not strictly speaking hieratic, Hindu and Buddhist painters in India obeyed a hieratic canon. Hence painting was cultivated as a means, and the painter, *chitrakara*, required divine skill, or at any rate the blessings of a god to evoke an aesthetic state which is akin to mystic union *(brahmasvadana-sahodarah)*.

Speaking generally, the history of Indian painting may be said to have begun with the wall-paintings at Ajanta in the first century of the Christian era. And looking at the paintings of Ajanta, it will strike even a casual observer that the art represented here is too sophisticated to be primitive. On the contrary, one should like to imagine that a well-developed tradition as well as critical intellection had gone to the making of the Ajanta murals. Although we do not know it for certain, we may assume that the principles of art laid down in the learned treatises and manuals, such as

Chitralakshana, *Vishnudharmottara*, *Kamasutra*, and *Silpasastra*, written in the Gupta period or perhaps earlier, must have existed in the form of mnemonic verses for the guidance of the Ajanta artists. Therefore, before turning to the Ajanta paintings, we must note briefly those essential principles of painting which the murals adumbrated.

According to the ancient tradition, art was not the representation of familiar objects of life. Nor was it the externalization of personal emotions of the artist. Familiar objects (landscape, still-life) as much as personal emotions and feelings were apprehended not for their own sake, but in relation to the Divine, because all objects of nature existed for the Divine, and derived their meaning from Him. The whole world was an epiphany. Hence to correct the artist's intuition by critical judgement, principles were formulated. Painting was governed by six principles or limbs (*shadanga*) mentioned in the commentary by Yasodhara on Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*, the Indian *Ars Amatoria*. The first of these is *rupabheda* or the distinction of forms. The form in this context signified religious objects mentioned in canonical texts. This precept is of no value if it were not based on the knowledge of the canons of proportion and perspective. Hence the second principle, that of *pramanam*, which means "correct perception, measure and structure" (*talamana*) of religious objects. The *pramanam* is only a means to secure *bhava* or the feeling behind form. It is here that a major artist would differ from a minor one. Correct perception, measure, and structure could be handled by a mere craftsman, but to secure *bhava*, to make a work of art pregnant with aesthetic emotion, *rasavant*, required the consecration of the Painter's hand. The fourth canon, *lavanyayojanam*, means addition of grace to form, while *sadrisya*, the fifth precept, is verisimilitude or resemblance to reality. The sixth or the last precept is *varnikabhanga* which means the use of brush and pigments.

Painting then is a finite form to hold infinity. The Six Limbs were merely directive principles, and therefore detailed rules were framed to explain them. As is usual, rules began to be multiplied and with more and more emphasis on rules, the healthy convention which expressed itself through painting, sculpture, and architecture became stylized and rigidly hidebound in the late mediaeval India. These conventions are a derelict lumber for the twentieth century artist ; but unfortunately, art in modern India, which has broken off these shackles, is yet without a creative convention. Ajanta artists worked within a convention elevated by a higher metaphysics of life. It was in terms of the aforesaid principles that they thought, and then translated their vision into paintings.

There are twenty-nine caves at Ajanta, but not all caves have paintings. From the point of view of paintings only six caves are important : Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, and 17. The earliest paintings (first century A.D. or thereabouts) figure in Caves 9 and 10. Next came the paintings of the single figures on the pillars of Cave 10 believed to have been executed in A.D. 350, if not earlier. According to the *Kunstforschers*, the paintings in Cave 10 were influenced by the Gandhara school of sculpture, evident from the treatment of drapery and the nimbus. The paintings in Caves 16 and 17 date from the sixth century, while Caves 1 and 2 house the latest paintings at Ajanta. The dating has been helped by the representation of an historical scene in Cave 1—Pulakesin II, the Chalukya king of Vatapi (Badami), receiving an embassy from the Persian monarch, Khursu Parviz, an historical event that points to the seventh century A.D.

The wall-paintings at Ajanta are not paintings in fresco, though the term has quite often been applied to it. A fresco is usually painted while the plaster is still wet ; at Ajanta, on the other hand, the artists applied brush when the surface was dry. The surface of the rock-wall was first covered with rough coats of clay, cow-dung,

pulverzied rock, and sometimes rice-husks to the thickness of one-eighth to three-quarters of an inch. When this was done, a coat of thin white gypsum was applied on it, the thickness of which did not exceed that of an egg-shell. Over this glazed surface the artists painted with water-colours. Red, brown, blue, green, black, and white predominated ; yellow was rare. But today most of the colours have faded except brown, green, and white. "The technique adopted, with perhaps some few exceptions," says Lady Herringham, "is a bold red line-drawing on the white plaster..Next comes a thinnish terra-verde monochrome showing some of the red through it ; then the local colour ; then a strengthening of the outlines with blacks and browns giving great decision, but also a certain flatness ; last, a little shading if necessary." Usually the figures in the Ajanta murals are presented as a light mass against a darker background, but to attract attention a figure was painted in dark colour.

To implement the Six Limbs of Painting certain arbitrary conventions were followed freely by the painters. One such convention was the absence of a frame. Hence one painting merges with the other at Ajanta. This convention had the advantage in that it helped the artists to put before the beholder the moving pageantary of the human and the divine life simultaneously in one sweep of the brush. If, however, the artist wanted to distinguish one scene from the other, he could resort to the convention of centrality whereby the principle figure in a scene was made larger than the other figures. In this way the minor figures in a scene were separated from the major figure just as the convention of rhyming couplet often separates one scene from another in Shakespear's play. Another convention was the verticality. It enabled the artist to obtain perspective and depth. In the Ajanta paintings the background figures are generally placed above those in the foreground. Landscape is shown also above the figures, and the horizon, as a rule, touched the edge of the frame.

But the most significant convention adopted by the Ajanta artists was the convention of line. The art of Ajanta is predominantly linear. The massing of forms, the interplay of light and shade of colour (chiaroscuro or values), the use of modelling and perspective have no place in the Ajanta paintings. Line can suggest only outline ; and an outline is lifeless. It does not create a semblance of visual appearance. Yet relying fully on the convention of line what a dynamic world the Ajanta artists have laid before us. Line has been made to suggest modelling, values, relief, foreshortening ; in fact, there is scarcely anything that line has not been made to suggest, a triumph that has been generously applauded by Griffths, the artist, who for thirteen years studied these paintings on the spot. Although roundness of form and solidity have been secured by line, we must not assume that the aim of the Ajanta artists was to attempt at three-dimensional mass ; what suggestion of mass appears is accessory, and springs from the mastery of line-drawing. In his apprehension of life the Ajanta artist found linear rhythm to be of greater service than the technique employed in European painting. Line here has been adapted to the expression of "Living Form", to use a phrase from Blake.

Apart from a few historical episodes, the subject-matter of the Ajanta murals is the life of the Buddha and the stories of his previous incarnations as narrated in the *Jatuka*. Since the historical Buddha as much as his previous incarnations spent their lives in the world of men and women, in the lap of nature, among beasts, birds, and flowers, we feel in these paintings the pulsations of life in ancient India in all its various aspects. Princes and courtiers, kings and priests, courtly ladies and humble women, masters and servants, all lend savour to this world with their adventures, excitements, joys, and sorrows. Yet the art is by no means anthropomorphic. We are constantly being reminded that the pleasures and beauties of the world, *samsara*, are ephemeral. Life is a series of moments, a

perpetual flux of momentary events and hence unreal in the ultimate analysis. It is by attaining *Nirvana* by the aid of the Great Deliverer, the Bodhisattva, that man can end misery, deliver himself from rebirth, and attain eternal peace.

The realization comes home when the Ajanta paintings are judged as a whole, not simply as a collection of paintings from among which one may pick one's favourites. Yet one's critical perception must necessarily be fully exercised in order to discern the outstanding masterpieces among the paintings. Among the *chefs-d'oeuvre* at Ajanta are the Seven Buddhas, Wheel of Causation, Mahahamsa, Matrposhaka, Sibi, Saddanta, and Visvantara Jatakas, Apsaras, and the painted ceiling in Cave 17 ; the Buddha triad, Great Renunciation, and Dying Princess in Cave 16 ; Great Miracle at Sravasti, Kshantivadin Jataka, Indraloka scenes, and decorated ceiling in Cave 2 ; and Mara Dharshana, Avalokitesvara Padmapani, Indra and Sachi, the so-called Persian Embassy scene, and ceiling with love scenes in Cave 1.

But the roof and crown of all is the Avalokitesvara Padmapani (Bodhisattva) in Cave 1. It is a very "Mona Lisa" of Indian painting. It is an expression of a spiritual beauty carried to its highest degree of intensity. The very ideal which inspired the Gupta sculptors is here at work. The expression that the artist seeks is one of idealized spiritual beauty determined and governed by canonical rules. We see here how carefully the artist had worked in accordance with the principles set forth in the Six Limbs of Painting. The subject-matter of the painting is the portrait of the Bodhisattva, the Buddhist god of compassion and tenderness, whose mission is to assuage human suffering by taking upon himself the sorrow of all earthly beings. Like Christ, he is the Suffering Saviour. He comes from heaven to sojourn among mankind to fulfil this mission. Hence by the very exigency of the subject-matter the artist was required to communicate through the figure of a body a feeling of compassion

and suffering at once superhuman and transcendental. The body, therefore, could not screen the many-splendoured soul. On the contrary, "soul is the form and doth the body make".

In dealing with such a subject-matter the artist could hardly rely on his own ingenuity. Hence he took advantage of the convention of centrality so that the beholder's attention may be riveted by it. The figure was painted larger than life. But we must not suppose that its dimensions were determined arbitrarily. The unit of measurement is governed by the principle of *pramanam.* The Bodhisattva being superhuman, his height is nine *talas*, one *tala* more than life-size. Again, the various parts of the body have been painted not with reference to human physiology and anatomy, but from ideals drawn from the world of flora and fauna. Thus the face of the young Bodhisattva has been painted oval, like an egg, since such is the ideal human face in Indian aesthetics. Similarly eyes, arc of brows, hands, neck, and head are all drawn according to canonical prescriptions. The gesture of the hand, too, is not an arbitrary gesture, but expresses a language agreed upon in the *sastras.* So also the rhythm of the body, the *tribhanga* stance.

And all these have been communicated by line alone. Whatever little chiaroscuro is found, as, for instance, in the fieshy parts of the body and both sides of the bridges of the nose, has been used not to suggest contiguous mass, but to infuse into the two-dimensional figure a feeling for smooth and rounded plasticity, to introduce a feeling for sensuousness in the youthful body. Conventional and hieratic though the painting of the Bodhisattva is, its refinements of proportion and rhythm speak a language not yet encountered in the history of Indian painting. Like all classics, the beauty of the Bodhisattva eludes analysis. The feeling that has been communicated by a delicate balancing of repose and movement, with its faint hint of a beatific assurance, is not one of

familiar human sentiments. But the language is neither life-denyi nor life-alien because, for all its vividness of evocation, is ultimately an expression of compassion and sorrow. Yet ho unreal is the language ! Indeed a curious dream-like insubstantiali broods over the whole composition and its appeal becomes all t more poignant if we relate it to the philosophies of "the voic and "dream" preached by the Mahayana philosophers of t Madhyamika and the Yogachara schools in terms of which t composition seems to have been perceived.

Like Gupta sculpture, Ajanta painting created a norm, ar bequeathed a style, which was imitated in India and outside. A Bagh in Gwalior, some hundred miles to the north of Ajanta, the exist a few murals in the verandah of Cave 4 in the Ajanta sty' Among them are compositions of the procession of elephant an a dancer and woman musicians, drawn with a brilliant bravur At Badami as well as at Ellora wall-paintings in the Ajanta mann can be found. The same style also inspires the Jain wall-paintin at Sitannavasal, near Pudukottai, painted during the time Mahendravarman I in the seventh century A.D.

Further south, in Ceylon, on the rock called Sigiriya (the Lic Mountain) are to be found some very beautiful wall-paintin having marked affinity with some of the Ajanta murals. The paintings were drawn at the instance of Kasyapa I at the end the fifth century. The best preserved among them is a bevy of twent one cloud-maidens, *apsaras*, or perhaps more mundanely they wer queens and concubines of King Kasyapa, in a recess in the cliff. Th languid charm of these sinuous bejewelled celestials, wearing elegar head-dress and holding flowers in various poses, are the works of artist who paid full homage to the seductions of sensuous life.

That painting was undoubtedly practised between the sevent and sixteenth century, is evident from literary references actual examples of painting, however, are lamentably meagr

Those that are intact indicate that the Ajanta idiom was still alive. In some Buddhist palm-leaf manuscripts of the mediaeval times can be found illustrations of Buddhist gods and religious places. Manuscripts of *Kalpa Sutra* from Jain temples have yielded some compositions in bright colours. These miniatures, drawn according to canonical prescriptions, are by far the best specimens of mediaeval painting in India.

MUGHUL MINIATURE

There is hardly any widely recognized school of painting between Ajanta and the appearance of the Mughul miniatures. Though the early Muhammedan rulers, the Delhi Sultans, left impressive specimens of architecture, we have scarcely any evidence of their painting. Mughul painting developed under the patronage of three emperors, Humayun, Akbar, and Jahangir. The beginning was made in a small way by Humayun when he requisitioned the services of two famous painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Khwaja Abdus Samad, from Persia to illustrate the *Hamza Namah*. Humayun had met these artists during his exile in Persia in A.D. 1544 at the court of Shah Tahmasp, the second Shah of the Safavi dynasty.

The *Hamza Namah* is a collection of 360 tales about Amir Hamza, a legendary hero of early Islam. Humayun did not live to see the work completed, and after his death it was resumed under the superintendence of Abdus Samad of Shiraz and Sayyid Ali of Tabriz during Akbar's reign. Fifty artists, among whom many were Hindu, collaborated in the work. The illuminated edition of *Hamza Nama* was completed about A.D. 1575 in twelve volumes of one hundred folios each. As each folio was intended to contain two pictures, the total number of pictures should have been 2,400, but only 1,375 paintings on cloth were executed. The reproductions of these

paintings may be seen in the edition by H. Gluck published in 1925; while what has survived of the originals are at Vienna, in the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum in London, in America, and in the priceless collection of Chester Beatty in Edinburgh.

Though Persian influence (the school of Bihzad) predominates in these illustrations, the style is not uniform. Diverse influences were at work chief of which was Hindu. As observed by Gluck, "The fact that all these elements are recognizable in one and the same picture in an association not quite unified, shows that our pictures belong to an initial stage of true Moghul art, in which the Persian factor which came in with Humayun still prodominates, but in which the native Indian factor later brought in by Akbar is already apparent; and where an independent court life has become vigorous enough to borrow and incorporate foreign formulae of even more distant origin without being subservient to them."[1]

Tentative attempts at integration over, Mughul painting emerged as a definite style. It is different from Safavid-Persian painting which was its immediate inspiration, and it is distinguished from the Hindu art by which it was influenced. Again, despite European influence Mughul painting never became a slavish imitation of European style. If it was a foreign importation, as indeed it was, it soon shun borrowed splendour and came to acquire the native dignity of homespun. Early critics, on the other hand, described Mughul paintings as of the *Irani Kalam*, that is to say, paintings in the Persian style, a view proved wrong by research. However, the very idea of miniature painting, of book illustration in the codex form, came from Persia. Mughul painters, to be sure, had no acquaintance with the Jain miniatures in palm-leaf manuscripts hidden in inaccessible temple chambers. Persian painting is a sojourn in the "realms of gold", and the use of sumptuous colours —the mosaics of reds and blues and gold—in Mughul miniatures is

a legacy from Persia. Again, many of the features of Persian painting, like the pictorial use of architecture, tent hangings, elaborate patterns, the splashing of gold, figure also in Mughul miniatures. Finally, like Persian painting, the painting is flat, an art of two dimensions.

Although a foreign plant, in India this art was not nurtured in the hothouse of either Akbar's or Jahangir's court. Akbar's enlightened tolerance, his eclectic nature made it possible for Mughul painting to draw its nourishment from more than one quarter. Free from religious bigotry, Akbar felt regard for all religions—Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism. Indeed, Akbar almost founded a new faith, which he called *Din Ilahi* (Divine Faith). Muslims in general, and Sunnis in particular, are allergic to painting, specially portrait painting. Not so Akbar. The oft-quoted statement of Akbar on painting may here be cited : "There are many that hate painting ; but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God ; for a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising its limbs, one after the other, must come to feel that he cannot bestow individuality upon his work, and is thus forced to think of God, the Giver of life, and will thus increase in knowledge."[1]

No wonder that under the patronage of Akbar Mughul painting should have been exposed to various influences. For instance, there were Hindu artists in Akbar's atelier. The author of *Ain-i-Akbari*, Abul Fazl Sallami, makes special mention of two Hindu artists, Daswanth and Basawan, who were among the few "forerunners on the high road of art." About Basawan he says, "In back-grounding, drawing of features, distribution of colours, portrait painting, and several other branches, he is most excellent, so much so that many critics prefer him to Daswanth."[2] It is not unnatural therefore that many Hindu features should be found in Mughul miniatures. Apart from such features as costumes, scenes from

village life, idols, the contribution of the Hindu style to Mu
painting was in imparting a sense of vigour, intensity, and actua
And this explains why representations of minutiae of nature and
in Mughul miniatures are less formal and less conventional thaı
Persian painting.

Nor should we ignore Akbar's and, for that matter, Jahan
interest in European painting. Akbar was known to
decorated his dining room with pictures of Christ, Mary, and M
before he received from the Jesuit Missionaries in A.D. 1580
copy of Plantyn's Royal Polyglot Bible, containing fine engraving
Flemish artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. T
European paintings deeply moved Akbar and his artists, and m
copies of them were made. According to Coomaraswamy, "An alt
of copies of European pictures, made by Kesava Das (Kesu),
completed in 1588."[3] Hence from the last decade of the sixte
century Mughul miniatures began to display unmistakable sign
European influence. This, as was to be expected, led to cl
realism. Animal figures, such as horses and elephants, came t
represented more vivaciously, and portraits handled more freely t
before. Attempts at third dimension were made, although the portı
still adhered to profile. The nimbus in the portraits of r
personages, which appeared during Jahangir's time, seems to h
also been inspired by European art.

Apart from the *Story of Hamza* other book illustrations w
undertaken in Akbar's times. In A.D. 1602 appeared the illustr
Akbar Namah or the life of Akbar written by Abul Fazl, a cop
which is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, Lon
The subject-matter of these paintings is the varied life of the Emp
at court, in camp, at the hunt, in conference with religious leac
They are full of details, and *Akbar Namah* is a veritable storehou
information about architecture, costumes, furniture, and mili
equipment of the Great Mughuls. Western influence is seen in

use of shading and perspective, while Hindu influence finds freer scope in the sweeping energetic movement of men and animals. Akbar ordered many Hindu classics to be illustrated and translated into Persian. Among them were the *Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Yogavasishtha Ramayana.* Akbar's copy of the *Mahabharata* under the name of *Razm Namah* with 139 illustrations may be seen at Jaipur, while a Persian classic, *Diwan-i-Hafiz,* said to be have been made for Akbar, is in the National Museum, Delhi. The latter contains besides the lyrics of Hafiz eleven illustrations by artists like Kanha, Farrukh Chela, Manohar, and others.

With Jahangir Mughul art reached its climacteric. Though not an artist himself, Jahangir displayed his love for art amply both in his life and writing. His *Memoirs* reveals that he could think pictorially. Those sensitive passages on the beauty spots he adored are as arresting as Mughul miniatures. His love for art was based on a deep knowledge of flora and fauna. He delighted in flowers, and liked them to be painted. Animals and birds he watched with the keen eyes of a naturalist. Jahangir did not limit himself to admiring prettiness ; he did not think that all that is beautiful is necessarily art. He could and did seek artistic expression even in apparently ugly objects. Thus on one occasion when a strange animal was brought to him from Ceylon, whose shape was like that of a monkey without a tail, he ordered the artist to take a likeness of it in various kinds of movement, since "it looked very ugly."

A true taste is never a half taste, said Constable; and the Emperor's catholicity of taste is shown in his sympathy with European paintings. He ordered them to be copied, first, because he loved them; and secondly, because he wanted his artists to discover their own limitations. He complained that his artists were deficient in giving vital expression to the gambolling and leaping of kids. The account of Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador to James I, tells us how he (Roe) on one occasion was unable to identify an original European painting

placed beside copies of it made by the court artists. The personality of Jahangir, his likes and dislikes, are reflected in the art which developed under his patronage. Among his artists were Ustad (master) Mansur and Monohar as well as Abul Hasan, who was honoured by the title of Nadir-uz-Zaman, "wonder of the age."

The variety and abundance of animal portraiture turned some of the miniatures into a veritable "zoological portfolio". Paintings of animals and birds, such as camel, zebra, buck, and doe as well as hawk, gazelle, chameleon, and turkey-cock are brilliant studies in the art of limning. These miniatures were skilfully mounted and delicately bordered with foliated designs or with conventionally arranged and harmoniously coloured flowers like poppies and lilies, jonquils and iris. Border design itself became an art. A fine realistic composition of fighting camels is preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay. The border is hemmed in by red and white buds, the background is touched with conventional gold ; while the action of the pair of camels is drawn in monochrome, except the trappings and bridles which are in dull red. In the same museum is preserved another exquisite animal miniature, that of a black buck and a doe, the buck's head sinuously tilted and its tail twitching.

Jahangir loved safari, and his court artists avidly painted hunting scenes with Jahangir playing the hero. In these were painted men, animals, tropical forests, equipments of hunting expedition, all within the compass of a miniature. A hunting scene, depicting the Emperor Jahangir shooting a lion clinging to the back of a frenzied elephant, reproduced in Percy Brown's *Indian Painting*, is an animated composition. In comparision with it the delineation of a Naga hunting elephants in the National Museum, Delhi, is feeble, though the fright of the huge quadrupeds has been depicted with a knowledge of animal behaviour.

Portrait painting also flourished under Jahangir. It had come into fashion with Akbar. Abul Fazl says in this connection, "His

Majesty himself sat for his likeness, and also ordered to have the likenesses taken of all the grandees of the realm. An immense album was thus formed : those that have passed away have received a new life, and those who are still alive have immortality promised them."[4] Francois Bernier, the French physician at the court of Aurangzeb, did not like Mughul portraits, as they were "deficient in just proportions and in the expression of the face". The first part of the statement is wrong, the second misleading. Regarding the first part it may be said that the Mughul painters did not believe in deliberate distortion like many modern painters. Moreover, in the art of representing likeness they were masters. Jahangir's delight in finding Roe unable to distinguish an original European painting from its copy might be recalled. Nor like Byzantine and Hindu artists did Mughul painters wilfully disregard proportions for representing the Unrepresentable. A Mughul portrait of a king is intended to look neither like a midget nor like a giant but a sober human being, only less informal, because the robe that drapes his limbs is a stiff brocade. And this brings us to Bernier's second point, namely, facial expression. The Mughul portraitist was bound as much by convention as by the pet vanities of his patron, the king. The artist therefore could seldom aim at an interpretation of character. He knew that the royal person had to be shown in rich brocade, wearing a plumed turban and with jewels around the neck. His hands had to be shown holding either a sword hilt or a flower or a falcon. In this way a hundred other accessories have to displayed for the true representation of a king.

Considering the limitations imposed on him, it is remarkable that the Mughul portraitist should not be more inhibited in rendering facial expression. One or two illustrations may be cited. Take, for instance, the Death of Inayat Khan dated A.D. 1618 in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. The emaciated figure is a striking expression of suffering from despair and anguish. Or, take again the portrait of

Aurangzeb as a Young Man (Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay), remarkable for its expression of manly vitality and intelligence obtained by careful drawing of head, ear, eyebrow, nose, and neck. In the same museum may be seen the portrait of Jahangir at Ajmer, said to have been executed by Govardhan (pl. 39). The composition is divided into two parts. The upper part consists of a view of the shrine of the saint Chisti together with the battlements of the Fort of Taragad in the background. In the lower half is seen the king seated on the canopied throne, issuing command to a courtier. Three saints are reciting religious verses, while servants are distributing sweets to the poor. All faces are sharply individualized ; not one resembles another.

Although Mughul art was exposed to alien traditions, and although it had the vitality to react to such traditions, we must not forget that it was a flower nurtured by the fostering care of the art-loving emperors. The bloomy flush of life that it enjoyed was brief, and it languished when it was no longer watered by imperial patronage. The recessional hymn was sung by Shah Jahan whose first love was architecture, and who found little time to cultivate love of painting. Numerous portraits, paintings of durbar scenes, and nocturnal pursuits (mostly hunting by night) indicate scrupulous care in drawing and in lavishing colour, but they lack grace, and are stiff and formal. After Shah Jahan came the puritanical and impecunious Aurangzeb, and contact with the artist became still more remote. The court artists sought protection under local courts in India, and with the passing away of Muslim aristocracy the art died a natural death.

RAJPUT PAINTING

In India, the two religions, Muhammedanism and Hinduism, did not produce either a unified religion or even a unified culture,

and though they inevitably influenced each other, Muslims and Hindus remained, to all intents and purposes, distinct. It is not therefore surprising that a Hindu school of painting should flourish at a time when miniature painting was being practised in the courts of the Imperial Mughuls. This school of painting has been designated as Rajput Painting. Born at the same time as the Mughul school of miniature painting, it outlived the Mughul school by a century. The term "Rajput Painting" or its variant "Rajasthani Miniature" is a portmanteau term. It seems to suggest one common style of painting practised in one single area, but Rajput painting, far from being strictly regional, was also practised outside Rajasthan at Basohli, Jammu, Chamba, Suket, Mandi, Nurpur, Kangra, and Garhwal in the Western Himalayas. The term "Pahari" (belonging to hills) is sometimes used for the paintings executed in the latter places, but in the absence of any differentia it is hardly of any use. Moreover even Rajasthani paintings possess no distinctive common style. Despite a common subject-matter and a common source of inspiration, local variations in manner and tone separate the works executed in different places within and outside Rajasthan.

It has been asked whether Rajput painting flourished independently of the influence of the Mughul school, and two views, exactly poles apart, have been offered. According to the first, Rajput painting, unlike Mughul painting, is essentially a folk art springing from traditional mural art. Traces of wall-paintings in the palaces of Rajput princes at Jaipur, Bikanir, and Jodhpur indicate that the tradition of Ajanta was still alive when Rajasthani miniatures were being painted ; and as Hindu art is religious, historic, and popular, while Mughul art is secular, eclectic, and aristocratic, Rajput painting has been thought of as the lineal descendant of the Ajanta. Attempts have also been made to trace back Rajput painting beyond the advent of the Mughuls, but so far no dated Rajput painting has been discovered. According to the second, Mughul painting

is the cause of the efflorescence of Rajput painting. Despite manifest differences, Rajput painting is like Mughul miniature art, and flourished together with Mughul art in centres most open to Mughul influenence. A like school of painting did not crop up in the South, for instance.

.Mughul miniature and Rajput miniature are two monads, each strictly circumscribed and complete within itself, yet acting upon one another. Obviously Mughul painting could not provide any inspiration to the Rajasthani miniaturists in the choice of the subject-matter, but it could and did influence the style. As regards the view that Mughul miniature was the cause of Rajput miniature, it may be wise to remember that an historical event, much less an art movement, can seldom be pinpointed to one sole cause. Many elements mingle to produce an art style, and we do not know which is the cause and which the effect. But the fact that no evidence has so far been discovered to prove that miniature painting existed before it was introduced by the Mughuls in India, the fact that after having committed "the sin of the slaughter of Chitor" Akbar atoned for it by bringing Rajput princesses into the royal harem, the fact that the Emperor appeased the Rajput chiefs of Amber, Marwar or Bikaner by entrusting them with military and administrative duties, the fact that there were many Hindu artists, and some of them from Rajasthan in the ateliers of art-loving Mughul emperors, should lead to the conclusion that Rajput painting must have been influenced by Mughul painting. The very conception of miniature painting is the contribution of Islamic *courtois* art, and Rajasthani miniature was closely affiliated to Mughul miniature.

How far is this new style in line with the unbroken tradition of Hindu art ? The charm of Rajasthani miniature, its sweet, simple, brooding, romantic tone can hardly be explained in terms of direct inheritance. The tone and temper of Rajasthani miniature shares as little with the adult sophistication of Ajanta as with the elaborate

mannerisms of mediaeval Hindu art. "The utterance of serene passion and the expression of unmixed emotions" in Rajput painting is a new note. It appears therefore that Hindu art tradition going round and round in a circle made a sudden sally *en route* and reappeared among fresh woods and new pastures.

Many elements brought to birth the new art style ; the foremost among them are the virility of the Rajputs, their stormy political history, and the impact of the *Bhakti* (Devotional) movement which swept through the country in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Throughout the course of Indian history Rajputs needed little to set them fighting among themselves and against the Imperial rulers of Delhi. They intrigued and rebelled readily with a heady impetuosity. The restlessness of the Rajputs, as well as their love for self-assertion, is reflected in their art. Thus in creating an art style Rajput painters consciously avoided over-ornamentation, the mediaeval tradition which they inherited. The same trend is found not only in their painting, but also in architecture. Rajput painting had little interest in the naturalistic manner of Mughul miniature. It reveals itself through rhythmic line, through bright but flat colour surface, and the note that it strikes is other-worldly in sharp contra-distinction from the realistic, worldly note of Mughul court art.

The other-worldly note was the contribution of the *Bhakti* movement. This movement received its principal support from the lowest strata of society which were left between the two stools of Hindu orthodoxy and Muslim bigotry. What tolerance was accorded to the Hindus was more on the grounds of political expediency. The worst victims of Islamic intolerance were the defenceless *sudras* and the pariahs or outcastes who formed the majority of the Hindu society. The *vaisyas*, the mercantile community, were left to their own devices ; for more often than not they held the purse strings of the rulers. And the *brahmans*, the elite of the Hindu society, had lost the vitality to take up the new challenge, and sought safety behind

the impregnable defences of more rigid rites and ceremonies. The challenge was met from below, and the *Bhakti* movement was the result. The new social and religious movement was mainly a Vishnava revival, and though it divided itself into numerous sects, its three principal forms, Ramaite (worshipper of Rama), Krishnaite (worshipper of Krishna), and deistic aimed at a form of social equality extended to the religious brotherhood which Hindu orthodoxy viewed with ill-disguised disfavour. The Brahman cleric, aided no doubt by feudal aristocracy, sneeered at the cult. In the end traditional Hindu orthodoxy triumphed, and the *Bhakti* movement petered out.

In its initial stage the *Bhakti* cult inspired both literature and art. Poetry in North Indian vernacular throve as a result. The Krisha-worshipping form of *Bhakti*, chiefly because of its erotic association, proved more appealing than the Rama-worshipping, and it inspired many a poet, chief among them being Chandidas of Bengal, Narasinha Mehta, Nakar, and Premanand in Gujarat, and one of the most effective, Mira Bai, "the sweet singer of Rajputana." In Rajasthan, miniatures dealing with the Krishna-Radha theme enjoyed the same wide popularity as the cycle of Vaishnava lyrics in Bengal. Miniature painters borrowed verses from Vaishnava literature and quoted them freely in their works. Moreover, in depicting the life of Krishna the Rajput painters adopted from literature the conventional machinery of pastoral idyll, such as the cowherds, the milkmaids, the lowing cattle, the dancing peacocks, rain clouds, and informed them with a delicate feeling and a whole-hearted delight. According to the Radha-Krishna cult, love (*prembhakti*), rather than knowledge (*jnana*) or action (*karma*), is capable of producing the hignest state of bliss in men and women. The elusive flame of love burns brighter when the desire of union is intensified by the infinite longing for forbidden love. Hence Radha is depicted as a princess and a married woman burning with

passion for Krishna, the amorous cowherd, playing his seductive flute on the bank of the Jamuna. Radha attains fulfilment only when she had effected a complete surrender to Krishna. Her eyes cry for Krishna's beauty ; and, as a Bengali Vaishnava poet puts it, "every limb of her body cries for every limb of his". Into Radha's love tryst one can read an amorous meaning, but such was not the intention of the Vaishnava literati and painters. The love of Radha for Krishna, the desire of the moth for the star, is the symbol of the quest of the limited human soul for the Divine. When therefore Krishna plays his flute not only Radha, but all those who hear it in the depth of their consciousness, are transmuted. The famous Hour of Cowdust from Kangra in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, will illustrate the point. The miniature very beautifully depicts the yearning of mothers at the sight of Krishna, who is returning home at twilight dusk with his herd of cattle. The restlessness of the mothers symbolizes the soul's yearning for God.

Besides religious miniatures, we owe to the Rajput painters a set of paintings known as *Ragamalas* or Garlands of Musical Modes, though those were also painted by Mughul artists. According to Hindu musicologists in North India, melodies are divided into six principal modes or *ragas*, each of which is subdivided into six minor modes or *raginis* (literally signifying wife of *raga*), and from them spring a number of derivative *ragas*, called *putra* (children of *ragas* and *raginis*). The six principal *ragas* are variously named, and the system of classifying melodies into forty-two modes, which probably originated out of devotional songs in the fifteenth century, has now been replaced by a more precise and rational system of classification. However, according to the older theory of music, each *raga* is associated with a specific passion or emotion. The very word *raga* means passion. It was felt that to evoke passion effectively, each *raga* should be sung in particular seasons and

at an appropriate hour. In the *Ragamala* paintings the artist depicts these emotional situations ; they are not pictorial representations of musical notations. Pictography of the musical modes was more or less fixed. Thus six principal *ragas* are generally represented in the manner described below. *Sri Raga* is represented as a divine being wandering with his love in a wood picking fragrant flowers. *Vasanta* is depicted by a young man wearing a yellow garment. *Bhairava* is represented by the god Siva attended by a group of worshipping maidens. *Panchama* is represented by a young couple. The picture of *Megh Mallar* shows showering rain clouds, while *Kedara* is represented by a group of musicians playing their instruments on a moonlit night. For depicting *raginis* also there was an established pictorial convention. Thus *Asavari Ragini* is represented as the female snake charmer, while *Todi* as a woman holding a *vina* to the music of which the wild deer are attracted. *Soratha Ragini* in the National Museum, Delhi, is represented by a woman stringing a garland attended by her *femme de chambre* (pl. 40).

In addition to Krishna subjects and the *Ragamalas*, many other subjects were handled by the Rajput painters, chief of them being scenes from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, illustrations of romantic poems like *Hammira-Hatha* and *Nala-Damayanti* as well as portraits of heroines and miniatures of seasons (*Baramasa*). Modern survivals of Rajput miniatures which are still sold in some jewellers' shops in Delhi and elsewhere are of little artistic merit. The tradition is dead, and its resuscitation is pointless revivalism.

PLATES

NOTES AND REFERENCES

BUDDHIST SANCTUARIES

1. Rhy Davids (tr.), *Dialogue of the Buddha*, p. 156.

2. E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, Chap. II, "The Vedic Chandra Cult and the Stupa".

3. The eight *stupas* were at Rajagriha, Vaisali, Kapilavastu, Allakappa, Ramagrama, Vethadipa, Pava, and Kusinagara.

4. According to some authorities, the earliest *stupa*, namely, the Piprawa *stupa*, is pre-Asokan.

5. E. B. Havell, *The Ancient and Mediaeval Architecture of India (A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilisation)*, p. 1.

6. The Twelfth Rock-Edict does not make explicit reference to the Ajivikas, the Brahmans, and the Jains. Hultzsch's translation of the rock-edict is reproduced below :

   King Devanampriya Priyadarsin is honouring all sects : ascetics or householders, with gifts and with honours of various kinds. But Devanampriya does not value either gifts or honours so (highly) as (this), (viz.) that a promo-

tion of the essentials of all sects should take place. This promotion of the essentials (is possible) in many ways. But its root is this, viz. guarding (one's) speech, (i.e.) that neither praising one's own sect nor blaming other sects should take place on improper occasions, or (that) it should be moderate in every case. But other sects ought to be honoured in every way. If one is acting thus, he is promoting his own sect considerably and is benefiting other sects as well. If one is acting otheswise than thus, he is both hurting his own sect and wronging other sects as well. For whosoever praises his own sect or blames other sects,—all (this) out of pure devotion to his own sect, (i.e.) with a view of glorifying his own sect,—if he is acting thus, he rather injures his own sect very severely. But concord is meritorious, (i.e.) that they should both hear and obey each other's morals. For this is the desire of Devanampriya, (viz.) that all sects should be both full of learning and pure in doctrine. And those who are attached to their respective (sects), ought to be spoken to (as follows). Devanampriya does not value either gifts or honours so (highly) as (this), (viz.) that a promotion of the essentials of all sects should take place. And many (officers) are occupied for this purpose, (viz.) the *Mahamatras* of morality, the *Mahamatras* controlling women, the inspectors of cowpens, or other classes (of officials). And this is the fruit of it, (viz.) that both the promotion of one's own sect takes place, and the glorification of morality.

7. Sir John Marshall gives the following explanation of the word 'Tope' : 'Tope' is a corrupt Anglo-Indian word derived from *thupa*, the Prakrit form of stupa. In Burma a stupa is commonly known as a *pagoda* and in Ceylon as a *dagaba*—a Singhalese word derived from *dhatu*=a 'relic' and *garbha*=receptacle or shrine. In Nepal it is called a *chaitya*, a word which like stupa, originally meant a heap or tumulus (*chita*) but subsequently came to mean a sanctuary of any kind." See Sir John Marshall, *A Guide to Taxila*, p. 99.

8. The word "Bodhisattva" in Hinayana Buddhism signifies a previous incarnation of the Buddha. In Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, it came to mear a heavenly being who works for the welfare of mankind.

9. E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, p. 36.

10. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, Plate XXXV.

11. Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 46.

12. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, p. 19.

13. According to O. C. Gangoly, "Chaitya is a religious term, while Stupa is an

architectural equivalent for a relic mound." *Indian Architecture*, p. 9. Both, however, are religious and architectural terms. The following definitions from *A Sanskrit English Dictionary*, ed. by Sir Monier Williams (Oxford) are cited in support :

Chaitya : relating to a funeral pile or mound : a funeral monument or stupa or pyramidal column containing the ashes of deceased persons. p. 402.

Stupa : a heap or pile of earth or bricks (esp.) a Buddhist monument, dagoba ; any relic-shrine or relic-casket. p. 1260.

James Fergusson, *History of Indian Architecture and Eastern Architecture*, pp. 117-119.

Ibid., pp. 113-114.

Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, p. 24.

See the section on Ajanta in "Painting".

See "The Hindu Temple".

Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 67.

E HINDU TEMPLE

Chandogya Upanishad, 1, 12. See Hume's translation in the *Thirteen Principal Upanishads.*

Heliodoros was the ambassador of Antialkidas, the Yavana (Greek) king of Taxila.

Bhagavad Gita, IV, 7-8.

Nicol Macnicol, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, p. 79.

E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, p. 76.

Ibid., p. 76.

7. E. B. Havell, *The Ancient and Mediaeval Architecture of India (A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilisation)*, Chap. VII, p. 95.

8. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, 6, n. i.

9. H. Goetz, *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, pp. 89-90.

10. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. I, p. 8.

11. *Ibid*, p. 9.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

13. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, p. 48.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

16. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Vol. II, p. 370.

17. Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 168.

18. Fergusson is quoted from Rawlinson's *India, A Short Cultural History*, p. 218.

19. Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 169.

20. E. B. Havell, *A Handbook of Indian Art*, p. 85.

21. Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, p. 86.

22. E. B. Havell, *The Ancient and Mediaeval Architecture of India (A Study of Indo-Aryan Civilisation)*, p. 164.

23. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu)*, p. 143.

MOSQUE AND MAUSOLEUM

1. E. B. Havell, *Indian Architecture*, p. 49.

2. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, p. 506.

3. H. Goetz, *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, p. 194.

4. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, p. 28.

5. James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, p. 576.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 581.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 585.

SCULPTURE

1. Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p. 151.

2. Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist aud Hindu)*, p. 1.

3. John Marshall, *Mohenjo-daro and the Indus Civilisation*, Vol. I, p. 45.

4. Stuart Piggott, *Prehistoric India*, p. 187.

5. Translation by S. Beal.

6. *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 620.

7. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1908), p. 1088.

8. See the lucid monograph on *Maurya and Sunga Art* by N. R. Ray for an exhaustive discussion of the problem. According to Dr. Ray, the statue belongs to the post-Maurya period.

9. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), p. 9.

10. See "Buddhist Sanctuaries" for a discussion of the iconic character of the Buddha.

11. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), p. 24.

12. For the Hinayana and the Mahayana see "Buddhist Sanctuaries".

13. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 52.

14. Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 74.

15. L. Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, Vol. I, p. 58.

16. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 71.

17. See O. C. Gangoly's essay on "Indian Sculpture" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, p. 541.

18. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), p. 35.

19. Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, p. 68.

20. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), pp. 44-45.

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1. The passage by Gluck is abstracted from, the quotation in A. K. Coomaraswamy's *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), p. 88.

2. Blochmann (tr.), *Aini Akbari* (The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Calcutta, 1927), pp. 113-115.

3. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Introduction to Indian Art* (ed. by Mulk Raj Anand), p. 95.

4. Blochmann (tr.), *Aini Akbari*, p. 115.

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